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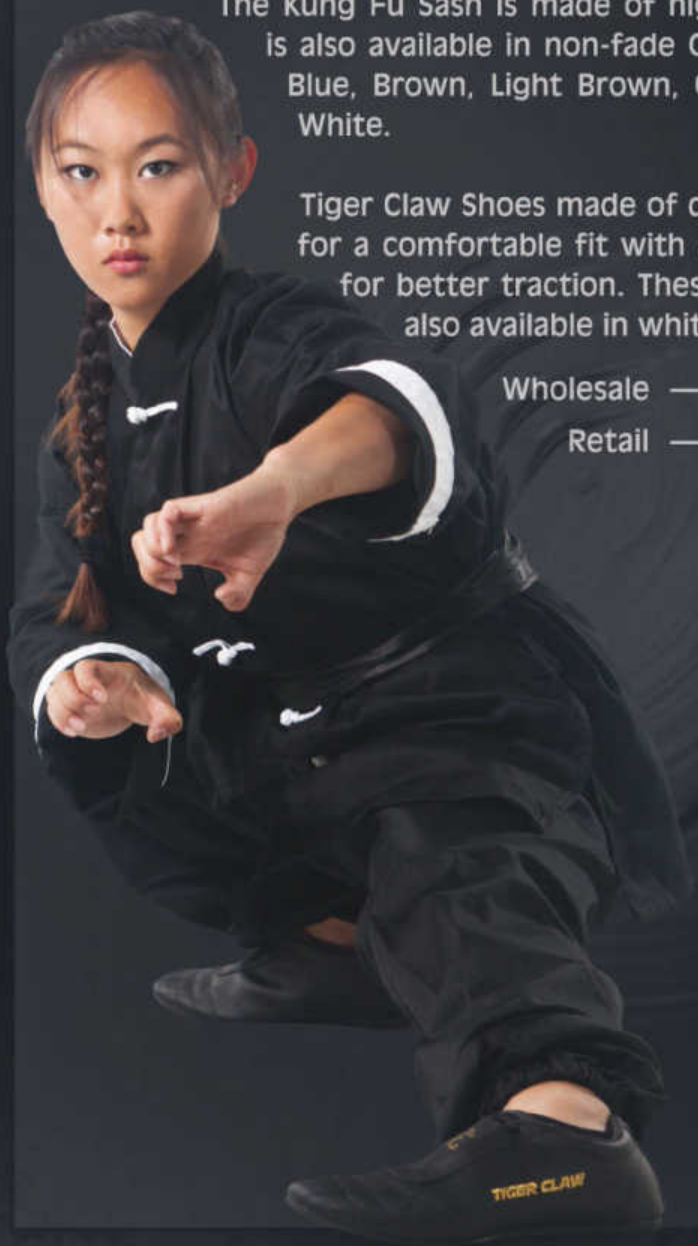
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If you can binge watch TV, can you binge train Kung Fu? This question has been nagging at me lately. I confess that I'm a Kung Fu film addict and as you'll read in my Chollywood Rising column (see page 90), there's been a lot of great vintage Kung Fu cinema available for home entertainment lately. It's tough on a Kung Fu flick junkie like me. I can't spend all night watching Kung Fu movies. Never mind the impact it has on my training time, I got to get up and go to work in the morning.

We've been monitoring the martial arts TV trend quite closely here, hence this issue's cover story. At the *Into the Badlands* Hollywood premiere (see page 55), I had the pleasure of a private chat with AMC President and General Manager Charlie Collier. "The martial arts fans are underserved by television," he told me quite candidly. "We want to serve fans of the martial arts genre just like we served fans of the horror genre with *The Walking Dead*". Collier is totally right for American audiences. There is always a martial arts section in video stores and as a category in streaming programming, so why not a TV series?

But in China, it's different. There are many martial arts TV shows in Asia. I became intensely addicted to the 2011 TVB soap opera *Grace Under Fire* (*neui kyun* 女拳) – not to be confused with the Chuck Lorre ABC sitcom *Grace Under Fire* from the mid-90s. The Hong Kong *Grace Under Fire* stars David Chiang, who I've been fan of since his sanguineous 1970 flick *Vengeance*. And his co-star Liu Xuan was a revelation. Her Kung Fu is strictly gymnastic but in her case that totally works for me. I much prefer watching a gold-medal Olympian do Kung Fu than some starlet who only has few weeks of training under her belt. Most of all, I was delighted to see David doing real Hung Gar. Jackie, Jet, and so many others who played Wong Fei Hung never actually did Hung Gar but from a Shaw Brothers veteran like Chiang, I would expect no less. If you've never seen a Kung Fu Soap Opera TV series, be warned. They can be so overdone - so sappy and melodramatic - and yet so deliciously addictive.



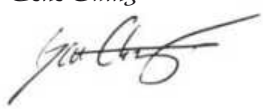
AMC President and General Manager Charlie Collier with Gene Ching at the *Into the Badlands* Hollywood premiere. Photo by Greg Lynch Jr.

Grace Under Fire ran 32 episodes. In the middle of the series, there is a story arc about the plague where there is very little Kung Fu fighting across several episodes. Normally that would be a deal-breaker for me, but those episodes followed our heroes through a different expression of martial arts. Instead of their fighting skills, it focused on their *wude* (martial ethics 武德). They risk their lives by going into the quarantined hospital in order to help the weak, the sick and the needy. Today *wude* is a romanticized notion, like chivalry in the European knights or Bushido in Japanese samurai. In all three cases, this notion of self-sacrifice for others is intrinsic to their honor. And it's exaggerated now, bolstered through fictional tales over the years. However, both knights and samurai still have extant written codes that are centuries old. While there are a few internal school rules within some Kung Fu lineages, there isn't a generally accepted written set of laws for *wude* like like Japan's *Hakagure* or the many lists of chivalric codes from medieval Europe.

Nevertheless, an earnest Kung Fu practitioner knows true *wude* when it is present. The *wude* qualities of humble sacrifice for others and the aversion to denigrating others, even when they are truly evil villains is being lost nowadays. Although these are romantic notions, civility and etiquette are crucial. Sadly, denigration is the policy *de rigueur* in modern martial circles, both in the cage and online. Even if these TV shows are fictional, the best ones still have lessons to be learned about how warriors should behave.

Tune in, turn on and practice *wude*.

Gene Ching



Associate Publisher, *Kung Fu Tai Chi* & KungFuMagazine.com

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Splendid October Celebrations in Chen Village

By Gigi Oh with Chen Xinghua



October in Chen Village is harvest season. Piles of freshly husked corn stand in the front courtyards of each home in this venerated farming village where Taiji began. Corn kernels dry on the shoulders of the roads like gold-carpet runways. Walking on it makes a "creak, creak" sound. The refreshing autumn air couldn't be sweeter for a series of celebrations that I was delighted to attend.

From October 1–3, I witnessed the Chen Taiji 19th Lineage Holder Chen Xiaowang's Sixtieth Anniversary of Martial Arts Training celebration and China Chen Taijiquan Summit Forum (第十九世掌门人陈小旺大师习武六十周年庆典活动暨中国陈氏太极拳高峰论坛). It began with a huge *baishi* ceremony (拜师仪式) where seventy Taiji enthusiasts bowed down and vowed to become Grandmaster Chen's disciples. A special ceremony observed ancestral rights (祭祖仪式), followed by a marvelous exhibition of Grandmaster Chen's calligraphy. Then in the evening, the Chen Taijiquan Summit Forum began. The following morning, thousands of people recited Chen Taiji's *Laojia Yilu* (老架一路) in a mass demonstration led by Grandmaster Chen before the Chen Family Museum. That afternoon, there was a special banquet in honor of Grandmaster Chen's 70th birthday.

At his birthday banquet, Grandmaster Chen was very happy, honored and appreciative of all his guests, especially those who had come from far away. He offered the following: "I've never celebrated my birthday in the past. I felt it was a waste of time and would rather use it to practice Taiji instead. When I was 19 years old, I vowed to pass down the Chen Taiji heritage. I wanted to excel to an advanced level. I didn't care if I had any support or backing from others. If I had so much support but my Taiji failed to achieve, ultimately I would've felt guilty. I remember once when our house was leaking and needed repair, I was afraid to delay my Taiji practice, so I let it go. One time, my feet got inflamed. All my toes were swollen. But I didn't feel good if I couldn't practice so I stood on my heels and practiced 20 times. In the '70s, a person with high Taiji skills was not guaranteed a job. Collecting tuition was not a righteous thing to do. If I gave up everything and concentrated on practicing Taiji, but still could not achieve my goal, what would happen? After a philosophical struggle, I convinced myself to focus wholeheartedly on the Taijiquan inheritance. 'Man proposes, God disposes.' When your skill gets to the second level, in two to three years time, you will feel that you don't see any light. This is not the time to be discouraged. Only through persistence can you get to another higher level. In my decades, I have taken a lot of detours. I want to use my experience so that others take less detours."

The organizing committee for this event was as follows: Director Chen Xiaoxing (陈小星), Secretary General Chen Jun (陈军), Deputy Secretary-General Chen Ziqiang (陈自强), Chen Yingjun (陈迎军), Chen Pengfei (陈鹏飞), Chen Bing (陈炳), Chen Zijun (陈自军), and Chen Gonghai (陈功海), Overseas Coordinator Ren Guangyi (仁广义). In attendance were many notable VIPs such as President of Chinese Wushu Association Gao Xiaiojun (高小军), Vice-Chairman of Henan Province Wushu Association Gao Wei (高伟), Jiaozuo City Wushu Association President Ren Chenggong (任成功), Xingyi Master Pan Xiaojie (潘小杰), Sun Taiji Grandmaster Sun Yongtian (孙永田), Wu Taiji Grandmaster Zheng Quanliang (张全亮), He Taiji Grandmaster He Youlu (和有禄), Wenxian County Head Tang Yi (唐毅), Jiazuo City major Zhang Wenshen (张文深) and several others. Presenting at the forum were Professor Li Luoming (李洛明), a researcher at the China Intangible Cultural Heritage Research Center; Americans Dr. C. P. Ong from Maryland and Derryl Willis from Washington, Xie Weijing from England and, of course, Grandmaster Chen Xiaowang.

Chen Taiji is blatantly focused on expansion, bringing the business economy of the art to the forefront. President Gao Xiaojun said, "Henan Province has two gold mines: Shaolin Temple, the birthplace of Kung Fu and Chan Buddhism; and Chen Village, the birthplace of Taijiquan. Shaolin has been promoted better, but now is the time for Taiji.


Font seated L-R: Chen Xiaowang & wife, Chen Xiaoxing. Back L-R: Chen Ziqiang, Chen Bing, Chen Jun, Chen Yingjun, Chen Zijun, Chen Pengfei





The opportunity is here. At present, Chen Village's Taiji product image is still rough. It is not precise, not as good as the Japanese and Korean promotions. We need to refine the overall packaging design. The government has set grants to help. It's up to the local people to make it happen." Tang Yi added, "After years of dispute, all other Taiji styles such as Yang, Wu, Hao, Sun (楊吳武孫) and the rest finally recognize the same Taiji family tree and agree that their own Taiji styles are branched out from Chen style Taiji."

Mayor Zhang Wenshen said, "October 20, 2015 is the 10th anniversary of the promulgation and implementation of the UNESCO 'Protection and Promotion of Diversity of Cultural Expressions Convention.' Jiaozuo Taiji Cultural Industry Development Group launched the 'Enjoy Taiji, Enjoy Well Being' commemoration campaign. Scheduled on October 18th, the plan is to hold simultaneous group Taiji performances in more than 30 cities domestically and abroad. The Chinese cities include Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, Hangzhou, and others. New York, London, and Seoul are among the cities abroad. We expect 100,000 Taiji enthusiasts worldwide will perform in group during 10 to 10:40AM and one million Taiji enthusiasts worldwide to perform different techniques between 6 AM to 6 PM. This event is set to challenge the *Guinness Book of World Records*. There are 10,000 people set for a group Taiji performance in Jiaozuo City. Jiaozuo is vigorously developing the 'Taiji economy' through the 'Tai Chi Tourism Festival.' Cultural heritage and economic development together achieve a win-win situation."

From October 4–10 was the 2nd Annual Grandmaster Chen Zhenglei Conference (陈正雷第二届年会). Formerly known as "Chen Zhenglei International Taijiquan Advanced Training Course" which had been held for 16 sessions, it was upgraded last year to include a competition, cultural exchanges, forum discussions and other activities to become a large-scale annual conference. The attendance from the first training session of a few dozen rose to a thousand in 2014. Chen and his two daughters, Chen Juan 陈娟) and Chen Yuanyuan (陈媛媛) and son Chen Bin (陈斌), along with their better halves, are all Taiji instructors and promoters. With the addition of abroad-educated 2nd generation family members, Chen Zhenglei Taijiquan has developed from one lone original master to more than 40 national franchises and some 140 teaching locations worldwide. Today, Chen Zhenglei has more than 600 certified disciples around the globe, of which more than 300 are professional Taiji instructors and eighty are ranked at 7 *duan* (段) in China. His Taiji family has become a tent-pole for Taiji development and a successful business model.

The major highlights of this year's event were the grand memorial activities with the group performance before the ancestral shrine, the Taiji Forum, and an evening show of the renowned Taiji grandmasters from Chen, Yang, Sun, He, Wu styles and other traditional forms. New for this year's event, a collection of Taiji, Chinese culture, Chinese music instruments, calligraphy and brush painting, tea, incense, and eight Intangible Cultural Heritage Traditional Opera shows displayed on the same stage.☯

For more information on Tiger Claw, visit www.TigerClaw.com. For more photos, visit *Kung Fu Tai Chi* facebook album.

















Wushu Loses 2020 Olympic Bid

In late September 2015, Tokyo's organizing committee for the 2020 Olympic Games announced the five contenders for new Olympic sports: Karate, Sports Climbing, Surfing, Skateboarding and, under a combined bid, Baseball and Softball. In June, Wushu had made the short list of new Olympic sports alongside the five remaining contenders and two other rejected sports: Bowling and Squash. This fall announcement sealed the fate for Olympic Wushu for the next half decade. The International Olympic Committee will make the final decision in August 2016.

http://www.kungfumagazine.com/forum/showthread.php?64475-2020-Olympics



Airman 1st Class Spencer Stone Credits Martial Arts

The American Hero, Airman 1st Class Spencer Stone, who helped overpower a gunman on an Amsterdam-to-Paris Thalys train last August, credited his Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu training for saving his life during the critical moments of that attack. Stone sustained several cuts, a fractured finger, and an injury to his right eye, but maintains that his martial arts training provided him with the mental discipline to maintain a clear head. He endorsed the addition of such courses to the Air Force program.

In October, Stone was stabbed again. He was in Sacramento, allegedly defending a woman that had been hit by a guy in the street.

http://www.kungfumagazine.com/forum/showthread.php?49825-Successful-Street-Applications&p=1286878#post1286878



Traditional Chinese Medicine wins the Nobel Prize

Tu Youyou (屠呦呦) was awarded half of the 2015 Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine for her role as the lead discoverer of artemisinin, a drug used to fight malaria. During the Vietnam War, North Vietnamese forces had developed a resistance to the common treatment of the day, chloroquine, so they asked Mao Zedong for assistance. Mao launched a military campaign that enlisted over 500 scientists to find a new malaria drug. Tu looked to the 4th century traditional Chinese medicine text *Zhouhou beijifang* (Emergency Formulas To Keep at Hand 肘後備急方) by Ge Hong (circa 283-343)(葛洪) and discovered an extraction method for the herb *qinghaosu* (Artemisia annua a.k.a. sweet wormwood 青蒿素) to produce artemisinin. However the Vietnam War ended and China plunged into the Cultural Revolution, so research stalled. It took over three decades for Tu to get the World Health Organization to endorse the curative. Earning the Nobel Prize is a breakthrough for the acceptance of traditional Chinese medicine worldwide.



http://www.kungfumagazine.com/forum/showthread.php?68980-TCM-and-the-Nobel-Prize

On KungFuMagazine.com: SEPTEMBER and OCTOBER 2015

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The Silk Road Kung Fu Friendship Tour Part 1: Xian, China and the Fabled Silk Road by Greg Brundage
HITMAN: AGENT 47: I Am Not a Number. I Am a Free Man by Gene Ching
The Silk Road Kung Fu Friendship Tour Part 2: The Kung Fu Masters of Xian by Greg Brundage
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The Silk Road Kung Fu Friendship Tour Part 6: Kung Fu In Almaty, Kazakhstan by Greg Brundage
36 Years of Beng Kiam by Tan Ka Hong
The Silk Road Kung Fu Friendship Tour Part 7: Interview with Dmitrushenko Yuriy Vladimirovich, President of the Kung Fu Federation of Kyrgyz Republic by Gregory Brundage
Ben Judkins and Jon Nielson on THE CREATION OF WING CHUN (Part 1) by Gene Ching
The Silk Road Kung Fu Friendship Tour Part 8: Interview with Uzbekistan's Wushu Federation President Mr. Ganiev Ravshan by Gregory Brundage

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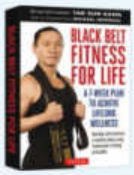
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Grandmaster Chen Qingzhou 1935–2015

By Gigi Oh with Gene Ching

On September 21, 2015, Grandmaster Chen Qingzhou (陳慶州) passed away. Grandmaster Chen was a 19th-generation lineage holder in Chen Family Taijiquan and a direct descendant of the ancestral founder of Chen Village where Taijiquan originated. He was the cover master of the Fall 95 issue of *Kung Fu Tai Chi* in a story titled "Secrets of Chen Village with Master Chen Qingzhou" by Marian K. Castinado.



Grandmaster Chen was the 4th child of a farmer family. He was born on May 13 by the lunar calendar, a day known as "Guan Gong sharpens his blade (关公磨刀日)," so he earned the nickname Er Guan Gong (2nd Guan Gong, Guan Gong is the patron saint of martial artists 二关公). He was frail, so his father Chen Wufang (陈五芳) taught him Chen Old Frame and had him practice standing meditation. He was admitted to Qinyang Middle School with honor in 1953 only to be denied due to his physical exam. Doctors discovered a heart problem and thought he would only live another three years. Chen returned to farming, but continued to practice his calligraphy at night. In 1962, he became a disciple of Chen Zhaopi (陈照丕) and rode his bike some 20 miles every weekend to practice under him. Chen worked as an engraver, an accountant, an office director and the director of a tire manufacturing factory.

During the Cultural Revolution, Chen Zhaopi was blacklisted as a counterrevolutionary because he taught Taijiquan. He was humiliated and denounced. Chen Qingzhou was placed under house arrest for three months where he suffered from stomach problems and severe diabetes. Chen Zhaopi passed away in 1972 while Chen Qingzhou was restricted to a sick bed. He vowed then to propagate his master's teachings.

After the Cultural Revolution, Chen Village became popular for its Taijiquan and students came to learn from Chen Qingzhou, including the Party Branch Secretary of a neighboring village. In 1984, the Ancestral Hall next to the Chen Village Martial Arts School founded the Chen Village Wushu Team and Chen Qingzhou was designated as the coach. In 1986, Chen became Head Coach of the Linzhao County Chen Style Taijiquan Amateur Sports School. His five sons, Chen Youze, Chen Youjing, Chen Youqin, Chen Youhua and Chen Youqiang (陈有则、陈有京、陈有芹、陈有华、陈有强), all rose to become Push Hands champions. They were known as the Five Tiger Generals (五虎上将). Chen Youze was the cover master of the July+August 2014 issue of *Kung Fu Tai Chi*. In 1987, in recognition of his dedication, he was elected to the Seventh National People's Congress of Wenxian.



In 1993, the First Annual International Taijiquan Meeting was held in Wenxian and Chen Qingzhou was appointed Deputy Secretary of the General Assembly. He won first place in Taijiquan, Taiji sword and Taiji Ball at the Wenxian County International Taijiquan Annual Competition. In 1994, Chen was officially recognized as a Taiji Grandmaster at the Annual International Taijiquan Meeting. He took on Kris Eckert, an American woman, as a disciple, which pushed him more into the world spotlight.

In December of 1994, Grandmaster Chen Qingzhou and Kris Eckert arrived in San Francisco to teach. For many Americans, it was their first exposure to Chen Taijiquan. Over the following years, he made six trips to America to spread his Taijiquan and taught thousands of American students.

In 1999, Grandmaster Chen was appointed Jiaozuo City representative of the 10th CPPCC National Committee meeting. That same year, the Linzhao County Chen Style Taijiquan Amateur Sports School moved to Xulu Village and changed names to Chen Qingzhou Taiji Kung Fu Academy. In 2001, the Qingzhou Wushu Academy was founded on 20 acres of land. The 4,000-square-meter complex includes teaching facilities, offices, dormitories, a restaurant, a performance hall, multimedia classrooms, and a library.

On May 2, 2004 Grandmaster Chen celebrated his 70th birthday with the Grand Opening of the Qingzhou Wu Yuan. Taking three years to construct, the school combines scholarly and martial studies. The following year, Grandmaster Chen received an honorary title from China International Painting and Calligraphy Institute and Chinese Calligraphy Art Treasure Editorial Board as "China Calligraphy Artist." He was renowned for his calligraphy as well as his paintings of tigers, human character studies, and chop carving. He was also a poet and composed many commemorative poems.

Grandmaster Chen published numerous books on Chen Taijiquan, as well as instructional videos. He taught more than 10,000 students and took on over 100 disciples throughout the United States, Britain, Japan, Germany, Portugal, Myanmar, plus more than twenty other countries and regions. ☯

For more, read "Grandmaster Chen Qingzhou 1935–2015" by Gene Ching on KungFuMagazine.com.

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世界太极拳网
The World Taijiquan Network
Recognizes *Kung Fu Tai Chi* Publisher Gigi Oh

By Gene Ching

The World Taiji Network (世界太极拳网), *Chinese Martial Arts* magazine (中华武术), *Wudang* magazine (武当) and *Wulin* magazine (武魂) jointly organized a web contest of unprecedented scale. My Favorite Chinese Taiji People Network Contest was a six-month-long web survey launched in February 2015. More than 1.1 million people participated, casting over 6 million votes over WeChat and the various web platforms of the magazines. Our publisher, Gigi Oh, was named as one of the International Taiji Outstanding Promoters. The six recognition categories and their recipients are as follows (each list is in alphabetical order by *pinyin* Romanization):

Top Thirty Most Popular Chinese Taiji People (最受欢迎的中华太极人物三十人)

Chen Longxiang (陈龙骧), Chen Xiaowang (陈小旺), Chen Zhenglei (陈正雷), Cui Yong (崔勇), Cui Zhongsan (崔仲三), Ding Shuide (丁水德), Fu Qingquan (付清泉), Fu Shengyuan (傅声远), Jiang Lugui (蒋禄贵), Li Bin (李斌), Li Bingci (李秉慈), Li Derun (李德润), Li Deyin (李德印), Li Zheng (李正), Liu Shuchun (刘树春), Liu Suibin (刘绥滨), Wang Dayong (王大勇), Wang Xian (王西安), Wang Zhiyuan (王志远), Yang Zhenduo (杨振铎), You Lizong (游理宗), You Xuande (游玄德), Zhai Wensheng (翟文胜), Zhang Maoqing (张茂清), Zhang Peng (张鹏), Zhang Quanliang (张全亮), Zhang Shichang (张世昌), Zhang Changzai (张长在), Zhang Zhijun (张志俊), Zhao Youbin (赵幼斌).

Taiji New Media Influential People (太极新媒体影响力人物)

Chen Bing (陈炳), Cui Zongsan (崔仲三), Fu Qingquan (傅清泉), Li Bin (李斌), Li Guoqing (李国庆), Li Wenjiang (李文江), Lu Dehe (吕德和), Tian Qiuxin (田秋信), Wang Dachun (王大春), Yan Genlai (燕跟来), Zhang Dongwu (张东武), Zhang Quanliang (张全亮), Zhang Yongtao (张勇涛), Zheng Jun (郑钧), Zhong Yunlong (钟云龙).

Taiji Healthy People (太极健康人物)

Chen Quanzhong (陈全忠), Hu Keyu (胡克禹), Qian Yucai (钱育才), Sun Wanrong (孙婉容), Xu Yizhong (徐忆中), Yang Dehou (杨德厚), Yi Junwen (尹俊文), Za Xi (扎西), Zhang Ziying (张子英), Zhao Tingming (赵廷铭).

Taiji Culture Outstanding Promoters (太极文化传播优秀人物)

Lu Dimin (路迪民), Mei Mosheng (梅墨生), Ruan Jizheng(阮纪正), Shen Tao (沈寿), Tong Xudong (童旭东), Wang Zhiyuan (王志远), Wu Wenhan (吴文翰), Zeng Nailiang (曾乃梁), Zhai Jinlu (翟金禄), Zhai Weichuan (翟维传).

Excellent Taiji Promoters (优秀太极推广人)

Chen Zhaosen (陈照森), Deng Yuanfu (邓元富), Duan Fuwen (段富文), Guan Zhenjun (关振军), Huang Haofeng (黄浩峰), Huo Peilin (霍培林), Kong Yunpeng (孔云鹏), Li Derun (李德润), Li Guoqiang (李国强), Li Yinghong (李应宏), Li Zhujun (李驻军), Ma Weihuan (马伟焕), Pi Chuanqiong (皮传琼), Qi Lutian (岂鹿天), Shen Baofa (沈宝发), Wang Wuquan (王武泉), Yan Haifeng (阎海峰), Yang Hefa (杨合发), Zhang Chunyuan (张春运), Zhang Dahui (张大辉), Zhang Xingzhou (张兴洲), Zhu Lirao (朱利尧).

International Taiji Outstanding Promoters (太极国际传播优秀人物)

Chen Sitan (陈思坦), Chen Xiaoyi (陈晓怡), Gao Jiamin (高佳敏), Chien Chi (Gigi Oh) (简 琪), Xie Shoude (解守德), Kong Xiangdong (孔祥东), Li Shudong (李书东), Liu Suibin (刘绥滨), Ma Guodong (马国栋), Pei Kangkai (Chris Pei)(裴康凯), Qian Timing (钱惕明), Shen Zhi (沈智), Tian Liyang (田理阳), Yang Jun (杨 军), You Xuande (游玄德). ☯



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Tiger Claw Judges' Union Luncheon Gathering

By Zhao Xiaohu

On October 18, 2015, the Tiger Claw Judges' Union held its first Luncheon Gathering at the Tiger Claw Headquarters in Fremont, California. The buffet luncheon was provided by Tiger Claw as a benefit for TCJU members to socialize. Progress with the TCJU, as well as preliminary plans to accommodate the expansion of the 2016 Tiger Claw Elite Championships and KUNG FU TAI CHI DAY (scheduled for May 21-22) were discussed informally. Beyond this event, the TCJU is now represented at Chinese Martial Arts Tournament at U.C. Berkeley and the Northern Californian Chinese Athletic Federation International WuShu Invitational. The TCJU membership is nearing 100 strong. ☯

For more information on the Tiger Claw Judges' Union, visit http://tigerclawjudgesunion.org.



Kung Fu Tai Chi recognized with Fremont Award

By Zhao Xiaohu



Kung Fu Tai Chi was the recipient of the Best of 2015 for Magazines by the Fremont Award Program. Now in its twenty-third year of publication, *Kung Fu Tai Chi* headquarters has been in Fremont, California since 1998. ☯

By Gene Ching



THE 4TH SHAOLIN CULTURAL FESTIVAL?





The number four is unlucky for Chinese. Four (*si* 四) is a homophone with death (*si* 死). For Shaolin, this *feng shui* superstition proved fatal for the 4th Shaolin Festival. The Shaolin Cultural Festivals began in 2012. The festivals are very unique, much more than just a martial arts gathering or tournament. There have been academic forums, theatrical shows, competitions and examinations, all under the parasol of these festivals and presided over by Shaolin Temple's Abbot, Shi Yongxin. Loyal readers of *Kung Fu Tai Chi* know the history of its development, but for new readers, the following overview is offered.

Its beginning can be traced to a precursor to the Festival, the Shaolin Summit, which was held in Los Angeles, California, in May 2011. This was an international gathering with panel discussions (your author participated on that panel), banquets, ceremonial blessings, and Kung Fu demonstrations. Supported by *Kung Fu Tai Chi*, the Shaolin Temple Cultural Center in Los Angeles (under Shi Yanxu), and United Studios of Self Defense (USSD), the Shaolin Summit heralded the formation of the Shaolin Association of North America (SANA), which, though having some very lofty aspirations for organizing the Shaolin Diaspora in North America, has done little more than launch a website.



The first Shaolin Cultural Festival was held in Germany and Austria in October 2012. With over a thousand attendees from twenty countries, the event was very successful. The Festivals quickly became a gathering place for Shaolin masters, disciples and aficionados from all around the world. The second festival was held in the expansive Los Angeles Convention Center in October 2013, brought together by most of the same groups that produced the Shaolin Summit with the addition of Joy of Kung Fu. There were demonstrations, university presentations, a competition and a Shaolin Warrior Certificate Examination. As it was close to Hollywood, several celebrities attended too, including Robert Downey Jr., Stevie Wonder, Mike Tyson and Chris Tucker. The third festival was held in London in October 2014 at the world-famous O2 Arena. Along with all of the festivities of the prior festivals, this event added the Chinese Zodiac & Treasure Exhibition, a display of China's 12 Zodiac Relics, which were the subject of Jackie Chan's 2012 film *Chinese Zodiac*. Abbot Shi Yongxin was present at all of these Shaolin Festivals as well as the Shaolin Summit, accompanied by an entourage of over two dozen monks. In March 2014, at the 10th Anniversary of Shaolin Temple Day in San Francisco, the Abbot confirmed that the 4th Shaolin Cultural Festival would be held in September or October 2015, also in San Francisco.

The 4th Shaolin Cultural Festival was scheduled for October 7-11 and supported by Shaolin Temple USA Culture Center (under Master Shi Yanran) and USSD, along with a soon-to-be formed World Shaolin Association. The original program included a Gala Vegetarian Banquet at San Francisco's City Hall, a Shaolin Forum at Stanford University, a competition at Metreon's City View, and a performance at the venerated Nourse Theater. But controversy arose in late July when an online post accusing the Abbot of corruption and fathering children went







Shaolin Warriors Meet photos courtesy of Chris Shepherd.

viral; this happened just as President Xi Jinping was launching a nationwide anti-corruption campaign. In the wake of the accusations, the Abbot retreated from the public eye, canceling a high-profile trip to Thailand for the 40th anniversary of Sino-Thai diplomatic relations and the birthdays of the Thai queen and princess. Coincidentally, Shi Yanlu, one of the primary accusers who has taken Buddhist vows but is not formally indoctrinated as a monk, also vanished from the public eye. Both Abbot Shi Yongxin and Yanlu reappeared in early October – the Abbot at Shaolin Temple to meet with visiting pilgrims and Yanlu in Beijing to speak to the press.

At the end of September, the Gala Banquet was removed from the schedule. On October 5, just a week before the event, USSD sent out an email to announce the cancellation of the tournament and Nourse performance. But with such short notice, few could change their travel plans. Attendees came anyway, some from as far away as Australia, Costa Rica and Greece. Only ten Shaolin monks directly from the temple managed to get visas. USSD bailed out completely, but Shi Yanran did his best to redeem what was left of the schedule.

On Friday, October 9, a cultural forum titled, "Shaolin: Ancient Wisdom in the Modern Age," was held in the Munger Conference Center of Paul Brest Hall at Stanford University. Organized by the Shi Yanran's Shaolin Temple USA and sponsored by Stanford's Center for Biomedical Ethics and Health Improvement Program, the program included several speakers, a forum discussion and a performance titled, "Kung Fu as a Moving Medidation." Master Shi Yankai, a monastic supervisor of Shaolin Temple, gave a short overview of Shaolin Temple, followed by Master Shi Yanlin, the Director of the Shaolin Pharmacy. Shi Yanlin's PowerPoint presentation was hampered by the time limitation, but he spoke quickly about Shaolin medicine, noting that a Buddhist doctor must feel the pain of the patient, which is the true definition of compassion. Chade-Meng Tan, a Google pioneer and seven-time nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, discussed the role of Buddhism in his life, particularly as a leader. He drew a distinction between kindness, which he defined as wishing for happiness in others, and compassion, defined as wishing others to be free of suffering. Dr. David Spiegel spoke about the integrative medicine program offered at Stanford, and Dr. Tia Rich discussed Stanford's Contemplation by Design program, of which she is director. She made an acronym for PEACE: Pause, Exhale, Attend, Connect, Express. After the performance, Shi Yanran led all the attendees through Shaolin's eight-section brocade. A vegetarian dinner was offered to VIPs and ticket holders.

On Saturday, Shi Yanran held the Shaolin Warriors Meet at the Sunset Elementary School in San Francisco. This was a private school competition, open only to Shaolin Temple USA students; however, all of the visiting Shaolin dignitaries were invited to attend. Shi Yanran was sensitive to how far some had traveled and did his best to make them feel welcome.

On Monday, an additional show – The Shaolin in My Heart – was held at the Reed L. Buffington Visual and Performing Arts Center at Chabot College in Hayward. This was under the auspices of the International Wushu Sanshoudao Association, the Northern Shaolin Kung Fu Academy of America, and supported by the Tiger Claw Foundation. The monks visiting from Shaolin Temple were accompanied by several of the monks and former monks who have immigrated to California, showcasing their skills at the beginning and end of the show. The central portion was demonstrations from local Bay Area schools. It was quite a privilege for their students to perform alongside this Shaolin monk delegation in such a formal setting.

In the end, like a Zen koan, the 4th Shaolin Cultural Festival raised more questions than it answered. Will this go down in history as the 4th Shaolin Cultural Festival or not? Of course, the elephant in the room was the fate of Abbot Shi Yongxin. He has weathered scandals before, but none this significant. In the last decade and a half, Shaolin Temple has grown to be the most successful temple in China, economically, politically and in the world spotlight. This has largely been due to the work of the Abbot. For any religious organization to succeed under communist rule is remarkable. If the Abbot is incriminated, what happens next for Shaolin Temple? It is worthy of note that the last two Shaolin Abbots only held abbacy for a short period. Shi Xingzheng was only abbot from 1986 until his passing in 1987. And prior to him, Shi Haikuan was only abbot from 1662 to 1666 (Shaolin was without an official Abbot for over three centuries). What's more, all of the official Shaolin representatives are direct disciples of Shi Yongxin. Whatever the fate of Shaolin Temple, *Kung Fu Tai Chi* will continue to cover the Shaolin saga as it develops with compassion and vigilance.☯



Smithsonian Hosts Made In Hong Kong Film Festival

By Ron Wheeler

On July the 26th, the famed Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. played host to the 20th Annual Made In Hong Kong Film Festival, with this year's event paying homage to the classic martial arts films of the past, and merging it with some of this country's legendary Chinese martial artists.

The coordinator of the event Tom Vick, enlisted the aid of Jow Ga practitioner and native Washingtonian Ron Wheeler to not only sit on the discussion panel, but also help to pick the film that would be shown at this year's festival. Joining Sifu Wheeler on the panel was martial arts legend Grand Master Tayari Casel, actor and Hung Ga stylist Bobby Samuels, and the one and only Hong Kong film producer and director Bey Logan, who flew in from Hong Kong to participate in this year's festival.

This year's gala, drew its largest number to date with nearly 200 people, all having the opportunity to view the Shaw Brothers classic film *Martial Club* (1981). They were also treated to a traditional Chinese Lion Dance by Jow Ga Master Raymond Wong, a top student of the late Master Dean Chin. A demonstration of both Northern and Southern styles of Chinese martial arts by panel members Ron Wheeler, and Tayari Casel not only wowed the crowd, but showed the diversity of Chinese fighting arts.

With such a diverse panel on the stage, and martial arts experts in the audience such as New York Wing Chun Master Alex Rickter, and Chen Tai Chi Master Stephan Berwick, this year's event will be a tough act to follow. But with Tom Vick at the helm, the 21st Made In Hong Kong Film Festival is in very capable hands.



Photo: From left to right; Ron Wheeler, Bey Logan, Bobby Samuels, Tayari Casel, Raymond Wong.

The First International Wushu Sanshoudao Association USA Branch Directors Preparatory Committee Meeting

By Sue Woo

On October 4th, 2015, the First International Wushu Sanshoudao Association USA Branch Directors Preparatory Committee Meeting was held, gathering several of the leading masters in the San Francisco Bay Area. The International Wushu Sanshoudao Association (IWSD) was founded by Grandmaster Shou-Yu Liang in 1987 and is a non-profit organization with full corporate governance. It is a vehicle for members to learn new skills and to improve their martial arts ability, functioning as a bridge for martial artists all over the world to learn and share their knowledge, and to develop greater camaraderie between martial artists. The goals of the Association are to promote martial arts worldwide and encourage cultural exchange in the global martial arts community. Its members include martial arts organizations across the world, martial arts schools from many lineages, fighting clubs, sports institutes and colleges, and people from all walks of life with an interest in martial arts. Building on Wushu Sanshoudao principles, the Association pursues traditional martial arts culture, health and fitness, equality, cooperation, and contribution to world civilization and harmony.

Present at this first meeting were Chen Nan (Chen Nan Shaolin Kung Fu Academy), Gao Jie (Elite Kung Fu Learning Academy), Gao Lei (Thunder Kung Fu Academy), Timothy A. Griswold, He Tao (Wu Chi Kung Fu Academy), Thomas Hsieh, Li Zheng (Legend Kung Fu), Li Zhi Zhou (California Kung Fu & Tai Chi Institute), Liu Wei (Northern Shaolin Kung Fu), Wayne Peng (Zhao Bao Tai Chi & IWSD Chairman), Steve Quan (185 lb Push Hands champion), Sheng Wei Cheng (Silicon Valley Kung Fu), Sun Guo Ming (Sun's Kung Fu Academy), Wang Le (Pure Shao Lin Kung Fu), Shuh-Hai Wong (International Wushu Competition Judge), Xu De Zheng (Pure Shao Lin Kung Fu), Yang Bing (Bing Yang Martial Art Academy), Ye Xinglie (Shao Lin Kung Fu Zen & IWSD Secretary General), Yu Zhen Long (Kung Fu Dragon USA), Yuan Long (Dragon Rhythm Shaolin Kung Fu), Anthony Yung (145 lb Push Hands champion), and Ben Xue Zhang (Ben's Kung Fu Academy & IWSD Vice Chairman).



The organizational structure of International Wushu Sanshou Dao Association includes the following units: Coaching Committee, Judges Committee, Belt Testing Committee, Traditional Martial Arts Committee, Calligraphy and Painting Committee, and Office of Martial Arts Industry. The main activities of the Association include cultural exchange, tournaments, martial arts demonstrations, martial arts education, belt testing, qualification of judges and coaches, designing martial arts equipment, costumes, and tournaments, martial arts festivals and tours, and development of the martial arts industry.

The IWSD Association recognizes and encourages the uniqueness of various styles and traditions, but considers the cultivation of an individual's ability more important than the distinction that divides one style or tradition from another. Their goal includes transcending the boundaries between styles to allow for the integration of a highly practical and versatile system of martial skill. ☯

For more information on the International Wushu Sanshoudao Association, visit www.sanshoudao.com.

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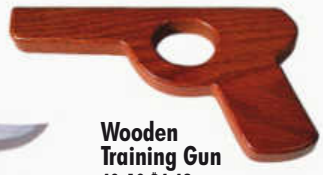
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By Gene Ching

Calling Out with CALLING HAND

Every tradition faces new challenges with each passing generation, including the very real danger of being lost. The elders may fail to pass it on. The youth may lose interest. The teaching may go astray. Old traditional ways require a deep understanding of history and context. A superficial approach will not suffice; the perpetuation of tradition is not for the shallow.

Naturally many traditions have become obsolete. But that does not mean they lack value. For example, while swordsmanship is antiquated, it is still respected in many circles. From the viewpoint of practicality, it's not often you have the opportunity to use a sword for self-defense on the street. Swordsmanship, alongside a wide arsenal of medieval weapons, remains venerated because it holds so many unique lessons beyond the cutting off of someone's head. Even though the original intention is no longer applicable in the real world, when learned in its historical context, tradition offers a unique perspective on today – what has changed and what remains the same.

Nowadays, the most criticized aspect of traditional martial arts is forms practice. Forms are denigrated because their applications aren't seen in the martial art *du jour*, MMA. Much of this belittling stems from a fundamental misunderstanding of what traditional forms are now: how they were deployed in the past and how they are commonly misrepresented today. Most misjudge form practice by basing their opinions on limited observations, specifically of forms presented publicly at tournaments, demonstrations or on videos. These are very particular instances. When presented out of context, especially with traditional systems, forms give only a small snapshot of a much larger panorama.

In a traditional form-based system, forms are taught progressively from beginning to intermediate to advanced

Small Ghost Nods Head Three Times (*xiao gui san dian tou* 小鬼三点头)



The opponents face off.



Master He Tao initiates with a *jiao shou* attack to the face. His opponent reacts with a block.

Calling Hand (*jiao shou*)



When opponents face off, both are on guard and neither has the advantage, so Master He initiates his attack.

Praying Mantis Kung Fu has many variations of *jiao shou* opening attacks, but for the sake of symmetry and explanation here, Master He's *jiao shou* is standardized as a backhand strike to the face. If the opponent fails to block, the *jiao shou* attack is real. Without a reaction, it becomes a simple straight attack.

level. Early forms focus on fundamentals like stance-work or basic strikes, or are designed for conditioning and strength-building. More advanced forms train specific methods of attack, like elbow strikes or snapping kicks. The most advanced forms have sophisticated theories underlying their practice, much of which is completely impenetrable to anyone who doesn't have a grasp of the unique underpinnings of the system.

Within the Chinese martial arts, modern Wushu has done significant damage to traditional pedagogy. As a sport, modern Wushu focuses on performing for judges. The forms are not composed for progressive tutelage; they are designed to get the most points allotted by the rules. Just like MMA, Wushu is defined by the rules of the sport and not by any projected notion spectators might have on the true nature of martial arts. Both MMA and Wushu athletes focus on training specifically for their sport. Martial sports are magnificent as they provide a level playing field to express the martial arts. However, reality isn't always fair, so it is a grievous error to judge martial arts by their sports alone.

Within the context of martial sports, the complexity of traditional forms are superfluous. The fighting roots of traditional martial arts came straight out of China's mean streets. It has a lot of dirty fighting techniques, strikes to the eyes, throat and groin, attacks that are illegal in any respectable sport. These are the real tools for self-defense, the desperate weapons to be used only in life-or-death situations. Unfortunately, a generation of Chinese coaches has been raised with modern Wushu now. Many have not been exposed to a complete traditional system and don't even know what they are missing.

Master He Tao (何涛) was on the Sichuan Provincial Wushu Team in the late seventies and coached Sanshou in Guangdong. Like many of his generation, he was raised under the competitive standards of the sport of Wushu, both in forms and in free-sparring. However, he found it unfulfilling because there wasn't much more beyond the competition. Despite being a successful coach and champion, He felt Modern Wushu did not realize the promise of Chinese martial arts mastery. So Master He pursued several styles of traditional Kung Fu. Now he studies Seven Star Praying Mantis (*qixing tanglang* 七星螳螂) under the 5th generation lineage holder, Grandmaster Liang Hongzheng (梁洪政).

Renowned for its fast snatching hand-work and sneaky leg-trapping attacks, traditional Seven Star Praying Mantis has many different forms, each with its own unique approach to combat. Mantis exists in Modern Wushu too; the most common Modern Wushu mantis is a form created by Grandmaster Yu Hai (于海) after the Cultural Revolution. Yu is also a master of traditional Seven Star Praying Mantis and is also proficient in Plum Flower Praying Mantis (*meihua tanglang* 梅花螳螂). He is most recognized for his role as the head teacher in the Shaolin Temple trilogy of the early '80s, the most pivotal cinematic breakthrough for Modern Wushu on screen and the debut of Jet Li. Yu's film career was the direct result of being part of the first generation of Modern Wushu athletes of China. Through his films and his role in Modern Wushu, Yu was in the right place at the right time to spread his new Mantis form around the world.

Most of the forms of Traditional Praying Mantis are short, executed in rapid-fire bursts of attacks. These forms are too short for competition, and as each form is an independent composition, it didn't look right to just combine two or three forms to meet those minimum time requirements of the sport. So Grandmaster Yu created his own form as a means to express his traditional roots within the modern sport. "The form is not Seven Star or Plum Flower," admitted Yu in a 2007 interview with *Kung Fu Tai Chi*. "It's unique." It only faintly resembles traditional mantis style by echoing some of the hand techniques. The signature Seven Star footwork is completely absent. Although Yu Hai's Mantis form is very beautiful, the absence of the Seven Star footwork is a major omission that detracts from its combat practicality. Whenever that Seven Star stance is deployed in the form, it trains a hook to the ankle or a kick to the shin. However, combat practicality is not an overt measure in the sport of Wushu.

The Calling Hand

In traditional form-based martial arts, the introductory forms focus on the most rudimentary techniques: stance-work, basic punches and kicks,



Master He seizes the block of his attacking hand, pulling the opponent's hand down while simultaneously striking his head.



Master He switches his hold on his opponent's arm and strikes again with his other hand.



Master He switches his hold on his opponent's arm and strikes once with his initial striking hand. His opponent nods his head with each strike, like a small ghost.

Obtain Treasure from the Bottom of the Sea (*hai di qu bao* 海底取宝)



The opponents face off.

Master He Tao initiates with a *jiao shou* attack to the face. His opponent reacts with a block.

Master He seizes the block of his attacking hand, pulling the opponent's hand aside.

Master He ends with a strike to the crotch. In sport fighting, crotch strikes are illegal or at least not condoned. In traditional Kung Fu, the crotch is a prime target.

Yellow Dragon Gropes with Its Claws (*huang long tan zhua* 黄龙探爪)



The opponents face off.

Master He Tao initiates with a *jiao shou* attack to the face. His opponent reacts with a block.

Master He seizes the block of his attacking hand, pulling the opponent's hand aside.

Master He follows up with an eye gouge. Eye strikes are illegal in every combat sport for obvious reasons of safety. But in traditional Kung Fu, the eyes are frequently targeted. Not only are they so sensitive that even a light hit can cause tearing, but it is a basic instinct to protect the eyes. A *jiao shou* attack to the eyes will draw the best flinch.

Yellow Dragon Gropes with Its Claws; Jade Ring Waist Cut (*huang long tan zhua; yu huan yao zhan* 黄龙探爪; 玉环腰斩)



In this sequence, two combos of *jiao shou* attacks are linked into one long combo. The opponents face off.

Master He Tao initiates with a jiao shou attack to the face. His opponent reacts with a block.

Master He seizes the block of his attacking hand, pulling the opponent's hand aside.

Master He follows up with an eye gouge but the opponent blocks.

Master He seizes the block of his eye gouge, coiling his legs as he steps in.

and simple blocks and evasions. Once a pupil has a grasp of these, the intermediate forms will progress to combinations. It's not really that different from boxing; it's just arranged more formally. A fighter trains a jab, a hook, a cross and so on, and then progresses to putting them together into combinations. A good form is, on its most fundamental level, a series of combinations strung together in sequence for a longer training session. Typically for traditional forms, the combinations in any given form will develop some opening attacks with a few variations for follow-ups.

A good combo starts with an attack and then follows up by attacking the openings made when an opponent blocks that attack. In the Chinese martial arts, this is called *jiao shou* (叫手), which literally means "calling hand." *Jiao* means to call, to yell, to be called, or to order. "I call your name," says Master He Tao. "Maybe you answer."

The first attack in a form sequence is the *jiao shou*. It's like the opening punch in a combo. In traditional Kung Fu, it is often directed to the eyes as those draw the biggest flinch. If the opponent reacts, the form has already built in the follow-up attack. In Seven Star Praying Mantis, it is usually a series of strikes in speedy succession. In this sense, the



Master He simultaneously traps his opponent's leg with his own, pulls the opponent's arm across to tie up his hands, and chops his opponent's floating ribs.

The opponent has no place to go but down.

jiao shou is like a feint. It is an action to draw a reaction, a knock on the door to make an opening. However, a feint must be convincing to work, and the best way to make it convincing is to make it real. "I do something, you follow," explains He. "If you don't respond, I already hit you. Any attack is a real attack."

Autumn Wind Sweeps the Leaves (*qiu feng sao ye* 秋风扫叶)



The opponents face off.



Master He Tao initiates with a *jiao shou* attack to the face. His opponent reacts with a block.



Master He seizes the block of his attacking hand, pulling the opponent's hand aside.



With a quick jump, Master He simultaneously strikes with both hands to his opponent's temples

Advance Step, Suffer the Needle (*dian bu ren zhen* 垫步忍针)



The opponents face off.



Master He Tao initiates with a *jiao shou* attack to the face. His opponent reacts with a block.



Master He seizes the block of his attacking hand, pulling the opponent's hand down as he coils his step.



With a stomping step, Master He transfers his grip to trap his opponent's arm with his own.



Advancing to trap his opponent's leg with his own, Master He locks down his opponent's right side limbs. Master He jabs his opponent's throat, another prohibited target in sport fighting but a prime one in Traditional Kung Fu.

These photo sequences are broken down and exaggerated for clarity of illustration. In each of these application sequences, it appears as if Master He gets off several movements to his opponent's single block. In reality, Master He's movements are much tighter and combined. Here's how the *jiao shou* attack and block seizure (the second and third photos of this application) appears in real time. However, if presented so in still photographs, it is hard to explain, so the breakdowns and exaggerations are a concession to the print medium.



Bind Fight, Wrap Brain (*chan tou guo nao* 缠头裹脑)



The opponents face off.



Master He Tao initiates with a *jiao shou* attack to the face. His opponent reacts with a block.



Master He blocks his opponent's blocking hand upward as he closes in with a coiling step.

The combos embedded in forms are practical for combat training if they are interpreted correctly. These interpretations are not rigid. Just like with training combos, a fighter must work with the techniques to find their own timing within them. The *jiao shou* technique is not always fixed. The combo might begin at many places within any given form sequence. Some sequences might have multiple *jiao shou* techniques, like combos setting up other combos. Some form combos can even be useful in martial sports as long as the final kill-shot to the vitals is discarded and replaced by something within the sport's rules. A good combo is a good combo, no matter what the context.



Master He uncoils his legs to punch to his opponent's throat.

Many traditional proponents get so caught up in the overall form that they don't distinguish the combos as such. It's easy to get overwhelmed by the complexity and depth of a good tradition Kung Fu form. In order to keep it real, traditional practitioners must train these combos separately, outside of the form. The combos must be trained with partners and pads because a solo form alone won't explain many fundamental principles of combat like timing, distance and velocity. Understanding *jiao shou* is an early step to unlocking the combos within forms for practical combat applications.☯

Master He Tao is the headmaster of the USA Wu Chi Kungfu Academy, located in Fremont (510-226-6813) and Pleasanton (925-225-1218) California. For more information, visit www.wuchikungfu.com. Master He's student Ken Quigley served as the opponent.

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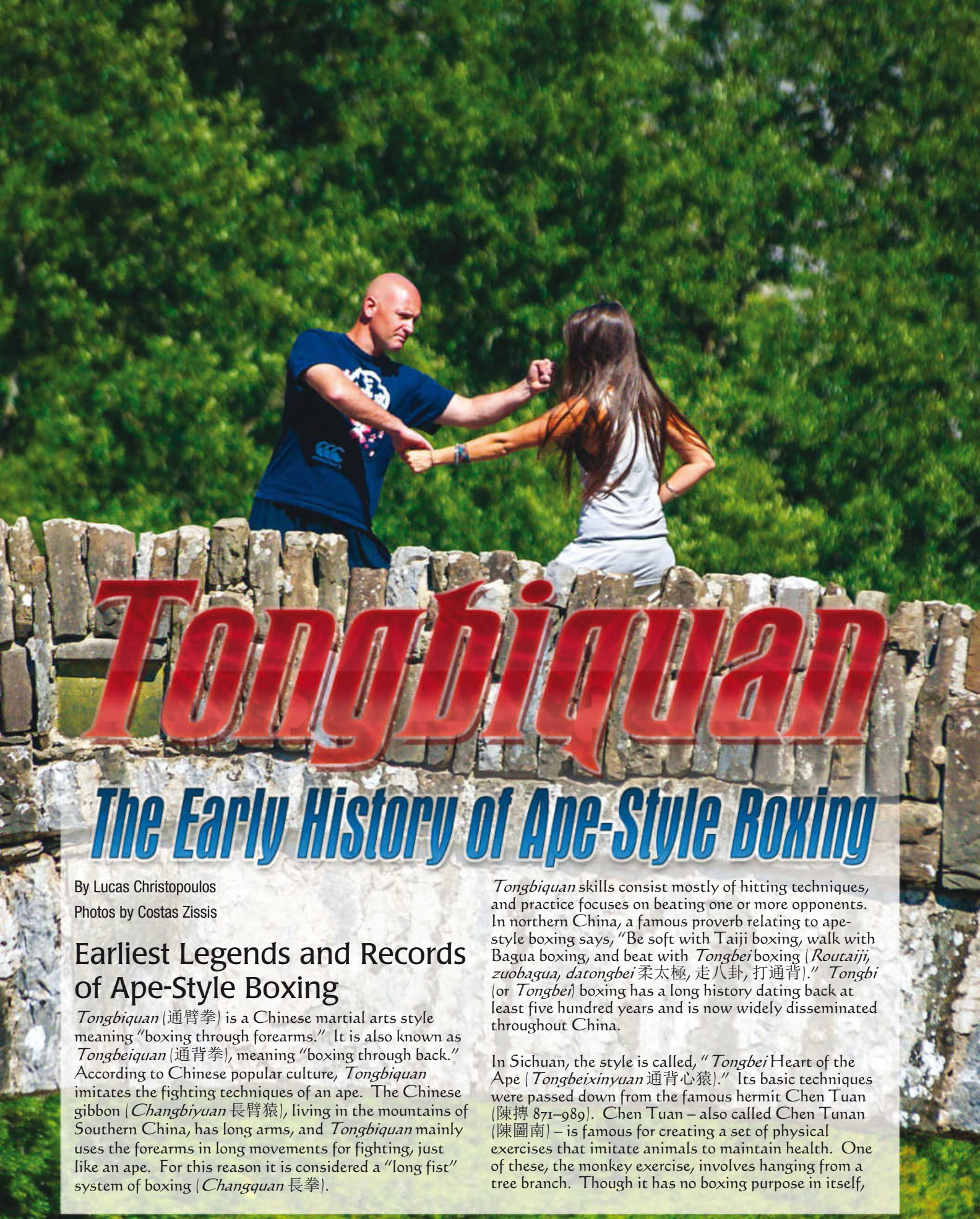
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Tongbiquan

The Early History of Ape-Style Boxing

By Lucas Christopoulos

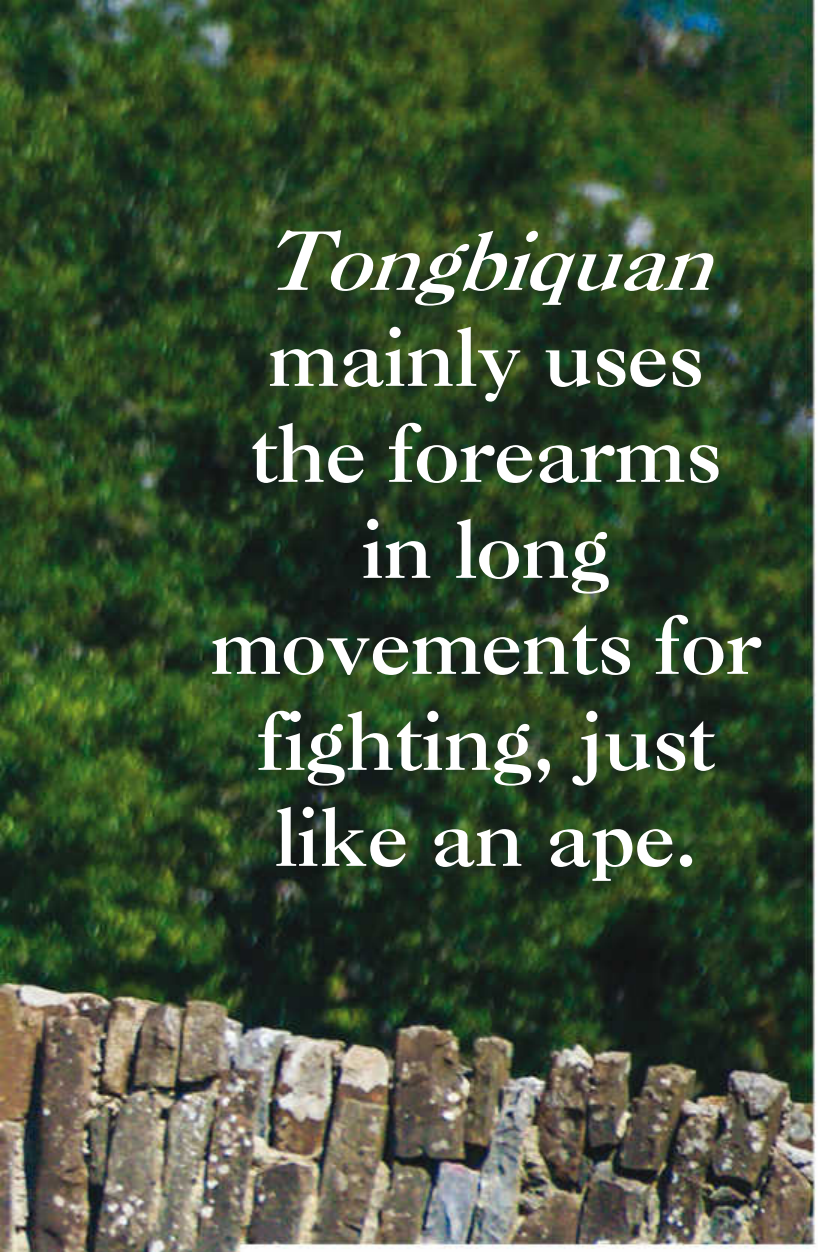
Photos by Costas Zissis

Earliest Legends and Records of Ape-Style Boxing

Tongbiquan (通臂拳) is a Chinese martial arts style meaning "boxing through forearms." It is also known as *Tongbeiquan* (通背拳), meaning "boxing through back." According to Chinese popular culture, *Tongbiquan* imitates the fighting techniques of an ape. The Chinese gibbon (*Changbiyuan* 長臂猿), living in the mountains of Southern China, has long arms, and *Tongbiquan* mainly uses the forearms in long movements for fighting, just like an ape. For this reason it is considered a "long fist" system of boxing (*Changquan* 長拳).

Tongbiquan skills consist mostly of hitting techniques, and practice focuses on beating one or more opponents. In northern China, a famous proverb relating to ape-style boxing says, "Be soft with Taiji boxing, walk with Bagua boxing, and beat with *Tongbei* boxing (*Routaiji, zuobagua, datongbei* 柔太極, 走八卦, 打通背)." *Tongbi* (or *Tongbei*) boxing has a long history dating back at least five hundred years and is now widely disseminated throughout China.

In Sichuan, the style is called, "*Tongbei* Heart of the Ape (*Tongbeixinyuan* 通背心猿)." Its basic techniques were passed down from the famous hermit Chen Tuan (陳摶 871–989). Chen Tuan – also called Chen Tunan (陳圖南) – is famous for creating a set of physical exercises that imitate animals to maintain health. One of these, the monkey exercise, involves hanging from a tree branch. Though it has no boxing purpose in itself,



Tongbiquan mainly uses the forearms in long movements for fighting, just like an ape.

it stretches and strengthens one's shoulders and arms. Born in Luyi, Henan province, at the end of the Five Dynasties and the Ten Kingdoms (or the beginning of the Song Dynasty), Chen Tuan lived for twenty years as a Daoist hermit in the Wudang Mountains (Wudangshan 武當山) before going to the sacred peak of Huashan (華山). He is said to have also visited the Emei Mountains (峨嵋山) in Sichuan .

Chen Tuan developed various gymnastic exercises for maintaining health and inner alchemy (*Neidan* 內丹), together with "sleeping meditation." The two main exercises attributed to him are the "eight pieces of brocade (*baduanjin* 八段錦)" and the "24 plans to re-harmonize (*ershisi xiuzhentu* 二十四修真圖)." He was nicknamed the Sleeping Immortal, and his erudition and skills in Daoist meditation made him one of the most influential scholars of his time.

Chen Tuan is referred by some as the founder of *Tongbeiquan*, but he did not create any boxing techniques, as he was not a martial artist. Though his health exercises imitating animals were later borrowed by some martial artists and integrated into their fighting theories, it is improbable that Chen Tuan was ever a brawler, and was more concerned with maintaining health and harmony. However, his stay in the Wudang Mountains, the main center for Daoist martial arts, no doubt influenced his exercises with Daoist martial arts theories and practice. Daoist principles are used in Wudang martial arts (Wudang wushu 武當武術), and as *Tongbeiquan* is closely related to Daoist theories, it is perhaps distantly connected to Chen Tuan. Another legendary Master of *Tongbeiquan* was Han Tong (韓通) (?–960), a general of the Song cavalry from Shanxi province (山西). According to some tales issued from the Shaolin Temple, he fought the ancestor of Praying Mantis style, Wang Lang (王朗), in front of the Shaolin gate.



But again, there is no evidence that *Tongbeiquan* was used. Wang Lang supposedly lived long after Han Tong, so this story may merely reflect a development within the Shaolin Temple some three hundred years ago.

The first real written record on *Tongbeiquan* can be found in the martial arts treatise *Southern Lightning Record* (*Nanleiji* 南雷集) by Wang Zhennan (王徵南 1617–1669). In his "*Six Songs Manuscripts* (*Liulugepu* 六路歌譜)," he claims that *Tongbeiquan* is one of the best fighting methods of the time and considers it a long-range boxing style (*Changquan*).

The White-Ape Old Man

The first legendary ancestor of *Tongbiquan* to be recorded in any manuscript from the various schools of the style across China was a Daoist fighting monk by the name of Situ Xuankong (司徒玄空). Living with apes in the Emei Mountains of Sichuan province about six hundred years after Chen Tuan, Situ Xuankong earned the nickname "White-Ape Old Man" (*Baiyuan laoren* 白猿老人). He supposedly developed the *Tongbeiquan* fighting method before travelling to the Shaolin Temple in 1615 (*wanli shisannian* 萬歷十三年) at the end of the Ming Dynasty.

"White-Ape Old Man" is a possible nickname for the real creator of *Tongbeiquan*. The style in 24 techniques (*ershi sishi Tonbiquan* 二十四式通背拳) of Situ Xuankong spread throughout China and has various denominations, such as Heart of Ape Tongbeiquan (*Xinyuan Tongbeiquan* 心猿通背拳), Heart and Mind Tongbeiquan (*Xinyi Tongbeiquan* 心意通背拳), Unify in One *Tongbeiquan* (*Heyi Tongbeiquan* 合一通背拳), Heart Boundary *Tongbeiquan* (*Xinji Tongbeiquan* 心極通背拳) and *Tongbeiquan* (通备拳).

Adepts of this school in Beijing claim that "White-Ape Old Man" lived during the Warring States period (during the fifth century BC). His real name was Baishikou (白士口), or Yisan (衣三), with the Daoist name of Dong Lingzi (动灵子), and he taught Sunzi (孫子), the famous Chinese strategist. According to the legend, Sunzi was assigned to guard a garden of magic peaches. During two consecutive nights, he realized that some peaches were missing from the trees. Sunzi then stayed awake during the night and saw a white ape stealing the fruits. The white ape asked Sunzi to give him his book on the *Art of War*, and in exchange the white ape gave Sunzi three scrolls with eight techniques of *Tongbiquan*, or the 24 style.

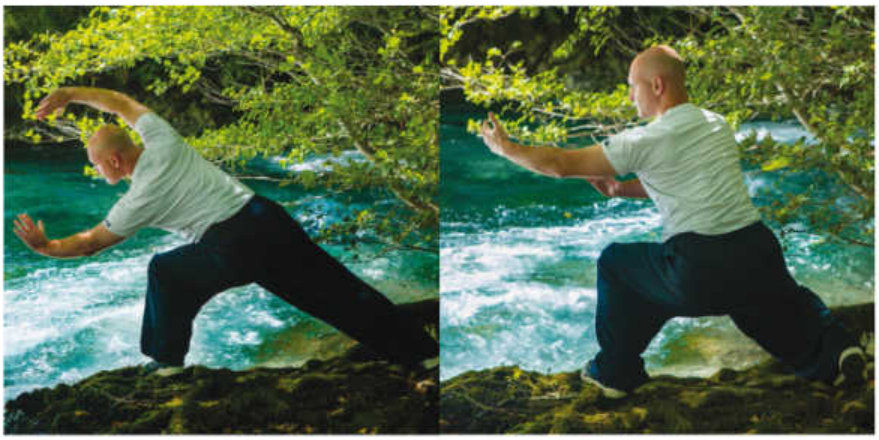
However, this legend is all fabrication, as neither *Tongbiquan* nor any other Chinese boxing school existed during the Warring States period. In China, legends often distort reality, sometimes mixing elements from different periods, so we need to trace the original sources carefully to get at the facts. Chinese martial arts makes this very difficult, as the fluidity and creativity of these arts leads to various developments and differences in various forms. *Tongbeiquan* was considered an "inner style" of Chinese boxing originating in the Emei Mountains, so it might also have issued from an Emei branch of martial arts (Emeipai 峨嵋山派) in the past. However, the transmission of *Tongbeiquan* became very widespread in Henan, Shandong, Hebei, Shanxi and Sichuan, with many adepts from the eighteenth century.

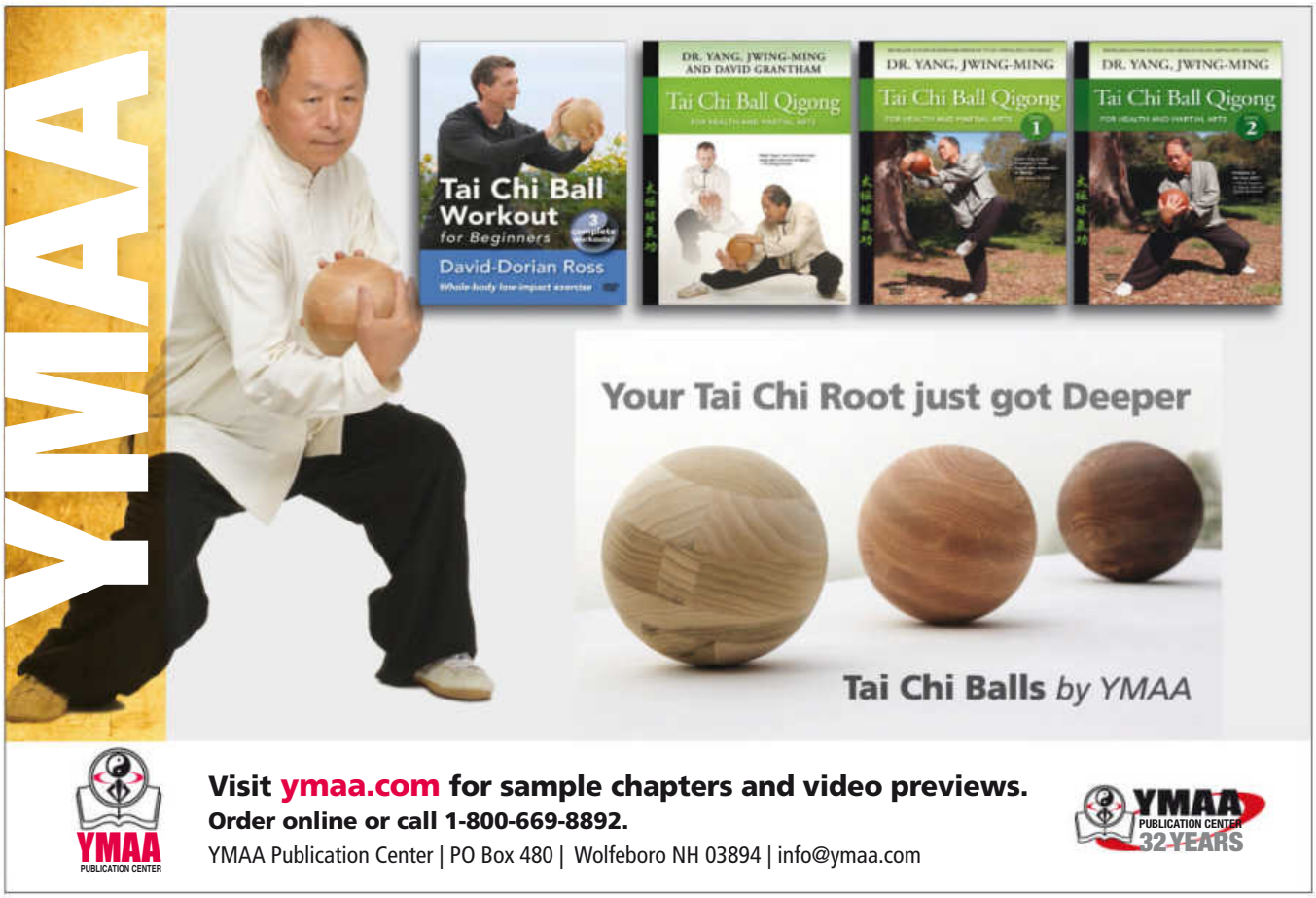
Tongbeiquan in Shandong and Henan after the White-Ape Old Man

The *Tongbeiquan* school seems to have spread widely after Situ Xuankong, and his possible travel to the Shaolin temple in 1615 may have played a significant role. The main disciple of Situ Xuankong was supposedly Bai Yunfeng (白雲峰), or "White Cloud

Continued on page 36







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Continued from page 34: *Tongbiquan*

Peak," sometimes also called Bai Yufeng (白玉峰), or "White Jade Peak." Bai Yunfeng was a Daoist monk who perhaps travelled to the district of Wei (濰縣) in Shandong province, there taking a disciple by the name of Gu Zhidao (古志道) near the end of the reign of the Qing dynasty's Emperor Shunzhi (順治 1643–1661). *Tongbeiquan* started to spread in Shandong province, with many fights against the principal boxing school of the region: Praying Mantis Boxing (*Tanglangquan* 螳螂拳). Some masters in Shandong also exchanged techniques with each other, as some of the Praying Mantis Boxing forms borrow names and techniques from *Tongbeiquan* as well. Gu Zhidao transmitted his art to a certain Zhang Dongfeng (張洞峰) during the reign of Emperor Kangxi (康熙), between 1661 and 1722.

Tongbeiquan spread as well in Henan province during the eighteen century. In the Hongdong district, it was known as Hongdong *Tongbeiquan* (洪洞通背拳). The style was brought there by a native of Henan named Guo Yongfu (郭永福) around 1770. After beating to death one official, Guo Yongfu escaped to Hongdong and taught martial arts to Zhang Xiude (張秀德), who was already a specialist of Red style Boxing (*Hongquan* 紅拳). Red style Boxing includes some *Tongbeiquan* principles, as large arm movements are seen in some of the forms of this style. As argued by some historians, some exchange of techniques may have occurred in Henan with the masters of Chen family's Taiji boxing in Chenjiagou, as the names of some techniques are similar. The style Immortal Ape *Tongbeiquan* (*Yuanxian Tongbeiquan* 猿仙通背拳) of Henan province also seems to be a mixture of Chen style Taiji and *Tongbeiquan* movements. However, the principle of being relaxed and hitting like an ape with large movements has been interpreted in various ways by a large number of adepts, according to their own views and martial arts background.

Lu Yunqing Transmission in Beijing

The story continues in Shandong with fourth-generation *Tongbeiquan* master Zhang Dongfang transmitting his knowledge to Lu Yunqing (魯雲清) during the reign of the Emperor Qianlong (乾隆 1735–1796). Master Lu Yunqing is the first pragmatically known disciple of *Tongbeiquan* with a real recorded biography, and he is known to have traveled to Beijing to teach his system of fighting during the reign of the Emperor Daoguang (道光 1820–1850).

Lu Yunqing was a native of the village of Zhou (Zhoucun 周村) in the region of Jinan (濟南) in Shandong province. Many martial artists traveled to Shandong to learn, as it was a famous martial arts center. Lu Yunqing was nicknamed "Appointed Little Master (*Xiaoren Shifu* 小任師父)," and he taught there to a few disciples. His nickname derived from his short



stature, long arms and piercing eyes, and his great skill in the martial arts, especially *Tongbeiquan*.

Lu Yunqing's main job was to sell fur, leather and winter jackets, and he traveled to many places on business. At the end of the reign of Emperor Daoguang, he moved to Beijing city, at Yongdingmen (永定門), near the Buddhist temple of Zongshou (增壽寺), where he would sell his leather in the adjacent market street. He had a tent and a shop, and his shop neighbor was a man named Shi Hongsheng (石鴻盛). Shi Hongsheng lived in a house near Yongdingmen, and he would invite martial artists to practice around his place. Shi and his friends practiced the forms of Three Emperors Cannon Fist (*Sanhuang paochui* 三皇炮捶), kicking and punching every morning and night.

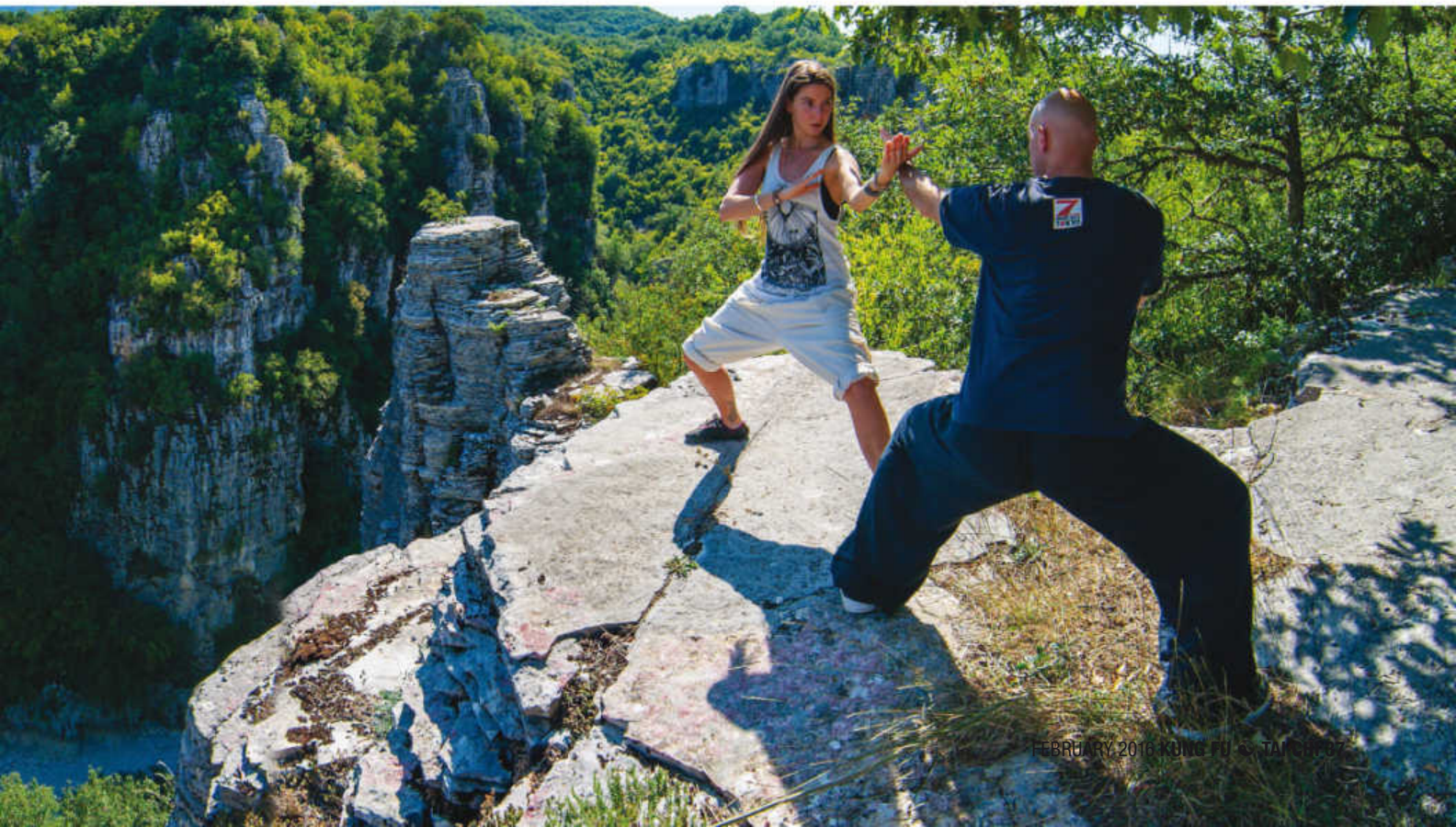
One night, Lu Yunqing closely observed all their training without speaking, and then he told Shi Hongsheng that his style was too short. In a short physical exchange, Yunqing then proved the superiority of his art by hitting Hongsheng repeatedly and escaping his attacks. Beaten, and recognizing the superiority of the moves of *Tongbeiquan*, Hongsheng asked Yunqing to teach him. Yunqing then took Hongsheng as his disciple in the troubled times of the opium wars and the invasions of foreign armies in China.

Lu Yunqing became famous teaching in Beijing; he had other students such as Han Dongyi (韓洞一), also known as Han the Old Daoist (*Han Laodao* 韓老道), abbot of White Cloud Monastery (*Baiyunguan* 白雲觀) in Beijing. Han also practiced at the inner alchemy school of the Dragon's Gate (*Longmenpai Neidangong* 龍門派內丹功), leading to further exchanges of martial techniques. The medical doctor Liu Ziying (劉子英) also studied *Tongbeiquan* with Lu Yunqing, along with the



leather shop seller Zhang Wencheng (張文成), Xiang Zhongshan (項仲山), and the Hui national Muslim Ma Xiaohe (馬曉合). Ma Xiaohe transmitted the 24 style of *Tongbeiquan* mainly to the Hui Muslim community of Niujie Street (牛街) in Beijing.☯

Lucas Christopoulos has been studying in China since 1992 under several masters including Master Zhang Zhicheng, Master Huang Baoshan, and Master Yu Baohua. From 1995 to present he has studied Hunyan Taijiquan, *Bajiquan* and *Longmenpai* Qigong with Master Chen Xiang. He did his PhD on Pre-Tang China combat sports history and has published academic articles. He now writes novels and trains in Japan.



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By Rick L. Wing

TRIPLE STICK



The three-sectional staff is an extremely versatile weapon. Some also call it the "triple stick." In Cantonese, it's called *sam jit gwan* (literally "three part stick" 三節棍). The triple stick has been part of traditional Chinese weaponry for many years and is a weapon of choice for Kung Fu masters, both northern and southern. Southern Kung Fu practitioners tend to use a heavier triple stick and, as is typical of southern styles, concentrate more on short-range applications. The southern three-sectional staff also tends to use heavier cudgels (sticks), so as to facilitate maximum damage when striking an opponent. The three-sectional staff used by northern practitioners is lighter and the sets focus more on long-range combat as well as an emphasis on spinning the weapon. These are rough generalizations and exceptions abound.

All parts of the triple stick may be used, depending on the distance and the desired destructive effect on the opponent. In addition to using the cudgel parts for a bludgeoning strike, the tips may also be used, as well as the joint (where sticks are joined by chain). If the tips and left and right cudgel parts are like fists, then the joint parts may be likened to one's elbows. Just as one might strike first with a fist, followed by an elbow strike, one might strike with the right cudgel, followed by an attack with the joint part of the triple stick.

It should also be noted that the triple stick has been showcased in several movies. In an early Shaw Brothers film, *The New One-Armed Swordsman* (1971 新獨臂刀), actor Ku Feng (谷峰) uses his triple stick to dispatch his opponents throughout the entire movie. Because his triple sticks are made of iron, this movie was re-released in the United States in 1973 (jumping on the worldwide Kung Fu action film craze) under the new name of *Triple Irons* – such being the uniqueness of this weapon in the eyes of the American public.

Essentially, the triple stick is a defensive weapon, a tool of personal defense carried easily on one's person. Under most circumstances, it is non-lethal in the way that a wooden staff is non-lethal, as opposed to the lethality of a spear. One would have to exert considerably more effort to hurt someone with a triple stick than with a sword, spear, Guan Dao, or even a small dagger. Shaolin monks were well-known for carrying staffs for protection, but not spears. A spear or bladed weapon made the statement, "I will severely injure you if you attack me." A staff or triple stick sent the message, "I will protect myself if necessary." Because the triple stick is used most often as a defensive weapon against other long weapons, it would not generally be used as an implement with which to choke the opponent.

The "Split Beard" hand grip



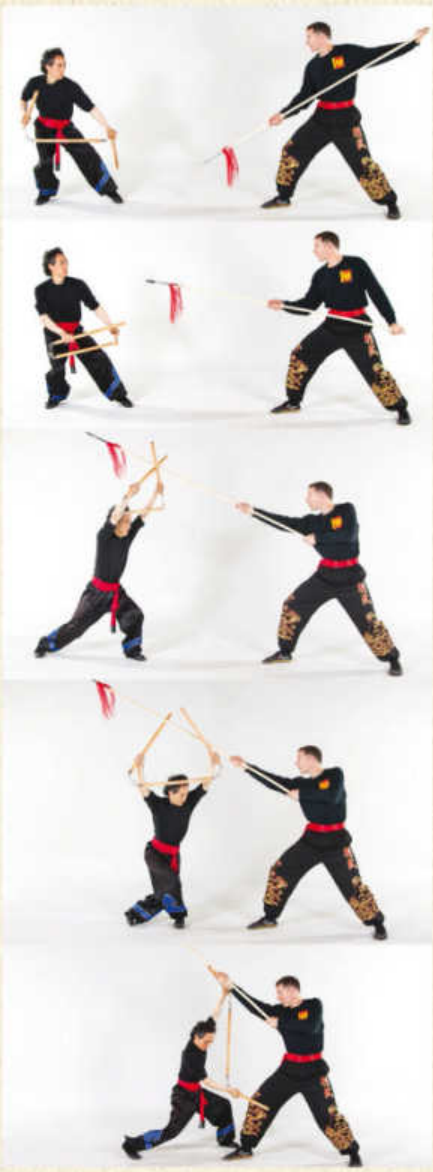


The Split Beard Hand grip defends against double end staff strikes, followed by a strike of the triple stick to the head.

Block the spear thrust with an X-block over the head and disable the attacker by quickly rushing in to rap him hard on the knees.



If the opponent has a heavy weapon (in this case the *Guan Dao*), one should let the opponent's blow pass before delivering a blow to the head.



When wielding a triple stick, one must be constantly aware of the position of the arms and hands. A common error when using the triple stick is getting the arms (or cudgels) crossed up. One must also be aware of the recoil when the flail end bounces back, sometimes in an unexpected manner. In the hands of a novice, a triple stick may prove just as dangerous to the user as to the opponent. Surely, many can recall the scene in *Way of the Dragon* (1972) where the bearded and mustachioed Italian man almost knocks himself out after he picks up the double sticks (nunchaku) and attempts to use it (Bruce Lee knocks him out a few seconds later using nunchaku).

When learning to use the triple stick, the practitioner should give it a healthy respect, as striking oneself in the head, knees or elsewhere can easily happen by accident. Anyone who has used the triple stick will tell you how they have injured themselves with a careless swing, especially when spinning the triple stick. In this most personal way, one learns the effectiveness of a strike on an opponent by first suffering many strikes on oneself.

The Split Beard Hand Grip

The most common way to hold a triple stick is with the "split beard" hand grip, where the left hand holds one end of the triple stick and the right hand holds the other end. The middle section simply hangs in between. This grip clearly exemplifies the idea of a weapon being an extension of the hand when using the triple stick.

With this particular hand grip, one can use the left and right ends as cudgels with which to parry or strike at the opponent. Most strikes and parries flow naturally from this hand grip, while one can use the ends of the triple stick as one would use the hands to strike or defend. Some applications of the triple stick will be shown where the adversary has some type of weapon. Applications of the triple stick against an unarmed opponent are fairly obvious. Analogously, it

The Coiling Dragon Hand position.





Parry the spear thrust with the middle section, and strike the attacker's head with the right tip. Clearly, the difficulty here is to have the speed and reflex to parry and advance quickly.





Parry the spear thrust with the left section, and strike the attacker's stomach with the joint.

The Swinging Tail Grip. An overhead swinging strike.



does not take much thought as to how one might use a spear to fight an unarmed opponent.

The Coiling Dragon Hand Grip

Another commonly used hand position is the "coiling dragon" hand grip. One holds the left stick with the left hand and the right stick with the right hand in a reverse grip. With this grip, in addition to using the left stick to parry and strike, one can use the point end of the right stick to poke, as well as the right joint (between the middle stick and the right stick) to thrust and poke. By changing one's grip quickly from the split beard grip to the coiling dragon grip, one can go from medium-range parries and strikes to close-range strikes with the hard tip of the right stick and the joint of the triple stick. These strikes come at unexpected angles for the opponent and will most certainly cause damage when concentrating the power of one's strike into the tip when targeting the head or neck, or into the joint part when targeting the ribs, groin or thigh.



The Swinging Tail Hand Grip

Another common hand grip is the "swinging tail" grip. One holds the left stick in the left hand and the center stick with the right hand. One can then use the left stick to parry and strike and the center part

Parry the sword thrust with the left end and then use the flail end to strike the attacker in the head.

Continued on page 44

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Master Rick L. Wing

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Continued from page 42: Triple Stick

to block; this leaves the right flail end free to whip and strike.

Just as with a double stick or nunchaku, one can generate tremendous force with the flail end using a small (or large) motion of the right hand. At medium-range striking distance, one can use the flail end to strike upward, downward, or sideways at the adversary. It should be apparent that when a person wielding the triple stick gets close, that person has a tremendous number of options with which to injure his opponent.



Sidestep slightly and strike the hand holding the sword with the flail end of the triple stick



Suppose that the opponent has a set of butterfly knives. Purposely miss the opponent with a downward forward swing from right to left with the flail end, and then come back and strike the opponent on the head with a reverse forward swing from left to right.

The Crouching Dragon Hand Grip

If an opponent has a long weapon, the triple stick may also be extended to its full flail length so that it may be used in the same manner as one swinging a chain or steel whip.

Losing the Grip

If the triple stick is pulled away, one can always fall back on using one's feet (or hands).

To momentarily keep several enemies at bay, or to strike at one's opponent from afar, hold one end of the triple stick and swing it quickly and forcefully so that one gathers enough momentum to bring the opposite end of the stick crashing down on the enemy. In this way, one can stay out of the opponent's range and swing the triple stick at him until an opening appears, or until an opening has been created. In this case, use the fully-extended length of the triple stick to advantage, daring the opponent to try to close the gap.

In addition to being an extremely effective weapon for defending oneself, the triple stick can also be used for the enhancement of coordination, health, and exercise. Sifu Wong Jack Man (黃澤民) taught a solo triple stick form and also the two-person sparring set, "Triple Stick versus Spear." In a two-person sparring set like this, one can clearly see the practical application of the triple stick in many different scenarios, and at various ranges of combat.



Spear pulling away the triple stick, followed up with kick to spear wielder.

Swing the triple stick as a long flail, holding only the right end of the stick.





As an alternative to practicing the solo set with a real triple stick made of wood or rattan, one can also use foam triple sticks. With foam triple sticks, one can practice the moves with confidence and without fear of serious injury, while still developing one's coordination. Anyone who has practiced the triple stick will at times strike themselves (hard) in the head, knees, or wherever else the triple stick may find an opening. Foam triple sticks allow a practitioner to learn this set without damage to one's physique…or psyche.

The triple stick is one the most famous of the eighteen classical weapons of Kung Fu, and its reputation as a fierce and effective weapon is well-deserved. Learning and practicing this weapon is an excellent addition to one's Kung Fu skill.☯

Rick L. (Bucky) Wing, in addition to authoring the e-book, S*howdown in Oakland, The Story of the Wong Jack Man-Bruce Lee Fight*, has also written many books on the Northern Shaolin Style, the latest being *Shaolin #6: Close Strike*, all available on www.amazon.com. He has also written the book, *The Classical Three-Section Staff*, which depicts a lengthy triple stick versus spear set once taught by Sifu Wong Jack Man. Rick L. Wing took over Wong Jack Man's Jing Mo Athletic Association, and his group continues to perform Kung Fu and lion dance in shows and demonstrations throughout the Bay Area. He is assisted in these photos by Darren Lee and Terrance Trumbo.



The triple stick may be used in the same manner as a steel whip to flail at the opponent from far away. The triple stick is extended to its full length as a flail, then the triple stick comes across his face.



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with Daniel Wu

By Gene Ching Photos courtesy of AMC/James Dimmock



IF you don't know the name Daniel Wu by now, he's the martial artist to watch. Starring in AMC's new series, *Into the Badlands*, Wu is an American-born Wushu champion and a founder of collegiate Wushu in the United States. He is also an award-winning Hong Kong leading man with over sixty films to his credit. With *Into the Badlands*, Wu ventures into something completely original, an unprecedented martial arts-laden television series from the same network that brought critically-acclaimed shows like *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad* and *The Walking Dead*. "I'm so proud to be amongst those shows on the AMC roster," says Wu. "They have a lot riding on this show. They've decided to go with something totally different, which is not like a formulaic list of things that they've gone through. *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad* are two totally different shows and *Into the Badlands* is a totally 'other' different kind of show. They are willing to try and explore something completely different and try something fresh for television. I think that's amazing. A lot of studios don't have the balls to do that."

And Now For Something Completely Different

"The show is martial arts drama but also has elements of Westerns, as well as steampunk, as well as all these other things mashed together," explains Wu. Early press releases describe *Into the Badlands* as being loosely based on the Chinese classic *Journey to the West*. "I think it's very, very, very, very loosely based on *Journey to the West*," admits Wu. "We're not really trying to emulate the story exactly, because the story of *Journey to the West* on the surface is basically how the Buddhist scriptures got from India to China, how Buddhism arrived in China. But all these sort of little challenges that the Monkey King sees along the way are actually the story of his enlightenment and his development as a character, because in the beginning he is a very rebellious, crazy, out-of-control monkey. And then through his journey with the monk as they go to the west and come back, he becomes an enlightened figure and he changes completely along the way. So we took that idea of a journey of enlightenment, a journey of transformation, for the main character of Badlands, Sunny. There are some tributes, like Sunny's name is actually Sun Wukong (孫悟空) the Monkey King's name. And then M.K. kind of stands for 'monk' but it's not meant to be a literal translation of that story in any way."

The production reunites Wu with his longtime associate, Hong Kong film maverick Stephen Fung. The two co-starred in Wu's debut film *Bishonen* (1998) and continued to work together on many projects, such as Fung's second directorial effort, the hilarious Kung Fu comedy, *House of Fury* (2005). "As soon as Stacey Sher [Executive Producer for *Badlands*] approached me to bring me on board, I brought him on board with me. We are already partners in our production company, Diversion Pictures, and we had produced *Tai Chi Zero* (2012), *Tai Chi Hero* (2012), *Control* (2013), a couple of other films already. We've also worked with each other on Stephen's directorial films for the past several years, so we're very close in terms of creative thinking. Stephen became not only an Executive Producer, but he became the Fight Unit Director, and responsible for the whole look of all the martial arts of the show. Working with him, it was great because it was someone I could trust with all the technical side of making the martial arts of it. And having him direct all the action, we definitely got a certain level of quality out of all of it. That was an important thing – we wanted to bring that Hong Kong style to television and the only way to do that is to work with Hong Kong people. So we brought the Hong Kong action team, Master Dee Dee Ku's action team as well, and then Stephen. Combined together, it was the three of us were responsible for the authenticity of the martial arts."



Dee Dee Ku, also known as Ku Huen Chu (谷軒昭), is a veteran fight choreographer who has worked on both sides of the Pacific to bring Kung Fu action to such notable films as *Once Upon a Time in China* (1991), *Fist of Legend* (1994), *Kill Bill 1* & *2* (2003, 2004), *Kung Fu Hustle* (2004), *Expendables 2* (2012) and dozens more. "Dee Dee, I've worked with him for a long time. On a couple of Yuen Woo Ping's projects, he was Yuen Woo Ping's right hand man. Going all the way back to *The Banquet* (2006), or the *Curse of the Black Scorpion* as they called it in the United States, I worked with him on that. I think the most recent was *That Demon Within* (2014). When we were thinking of choreographers that we could work with on *Badlands*, Dee Dee was the first one because of his experience with American projects, with the *Matrix* series, *Crouching Tiger* and all that stuff. So his English speaking communication was adequate enough to get along with American crews and he's also experienced with working with American crews and working with unions and that kind of stuff that a lot of Hong Kong people don't have to deal with. He ended up being one of the greatest parts of the show, I think, because his ability, his working crew, the people he brought on, they're amazing."

Wu credits Ku as being able to transform the rest of the cast into martial artists. "We had a six-week fight camp and brought them in for intensive training." Ku managed to get Aramis Knight (who plays M.K.) to do aerial cartwheels in that short period. "Emily



Beecham (who plays Widow) had a lot of progress as well in her fight scenes. She has one fight scene that was pretty incredible. It's mostly her on her own. This is all due to Dee Dee's really great ability in picking what people are really good at and making that shine. He didn't try to get her to do stuff that she wasn't good at, or that she could do very well. He picked out stuff during the training sessions that he saw potential in and worked on moves that she could use."

Unlike the overdone Superhero genre, *Into the Badlands* made an effort to avoid relying too heavily on computer-generated image special effects. "There's a little bit, you'll see as the story develops, there's a martial arts power that the kid develops. There's a little bit of CGI there, but not much at all. Most of it is done with in-camera tricks and anything CGI is simple stuff like wiping away wires, things like that. We wanted to keep it as analog as possible so people could enjoy the action for the action's sake." The intention was to showcase the martial arts. "In several of our fight scenes, we have long shots, like a 20- or 30-second shot with 10 to 20 moves. We do try to keep it like Hong Kong action. If the performer is





able to perform a long shot, we use them as long as we possibly can. If we can get them to do 20 or 30 moves in a row without cutting away, we let that happen. That's always an amazing thing to see – a straight fight without any cuts in it."

For Wu, he had to dust off his old Wushu skills to make Sunny as authentic as possible, but he is quick to say he didn't do all of his own stunts. "All the dangerous stuff the studio doesn't allow me to do, stuff that looks like I might get hurt on, stuff like that. Most of the stuff I'm doing myself." But the martial stuff was mostly him, especially the sword fighting. "At first, I hadn't done sword-fighting in a long time so it was like, 'Aw, this is going to be tough…on me' – especially double sword because my left hand has always been my weaker point when I did double weapons in the past. So in the six-week fight camp I just focused on working on double weapon fighting the whole time. I actually got pretty good at it and got my old skills back. I ended up actually having more fun with that than with the fist and kick stuff."



What's more, Wu was able to design his own swords. He got to work with Weta Workshops in New Zealand, the preeminent weapon designers for film today that came to prominence with the *Lord of the Rings* films. "There was a lot of thought about sword design. I really got excited about that because we wanted to make a sword that you could not necessarily pick out culturally. So it's not really a traditional *katana*. It looks like double *katanas*. They're single edged like the *katana* but they're straight like the *jian*. But they actually work like a *dao*. But they look like *katanas*. They're lighter like *katanas*. We actually gone through several renditions. This had been a dream of mine having done martial arts my whole life, being able to design your own sword based on experiences you had in the past, right?"



Keeping that high production value of the fights is more difficult than it sounds. Television works much faster than film. "One thing we realized, why no one has done this before, it's extremely difficult in terms of just scheduling. Trying to get all the fights and drama shot in the time we have allotted. It's an average of 8 to 10 days per episode so we had very little time to do two major fight scenes per block of time. The way we did it is we had a fight unit and a main unit. The main unit is shooting all the drama. The fight unit is only shooting action stuff. And we're shooting at the same time, so Monday through Friday is the drama unit and then Tuesday through Saturday is the action unit. In a lot of cases, I'd go to the drama unit for a couple hours and then rush over to the fight unit and fight all day long. A lot of times, what they had to do because I can't be there for the fight, because I'm shooting drama, if they're shooting say me and Emily fighting, they'll put in my double while the shooting occurs for her side of the fight. She's fighting my double not because I can't fight it. It's because I can't be there physically. So she's fighting with somebody else, and if I can get there in time, I'll slip in and replace that person. But that's strictly a time thing. It's not about skills. It's about being efficient and shooting as much as possible.

"You need time. For example, we have a rain fight scene which you've probably seen in the trailer. It's equivalent of *The Grandmaster* (2013) rain fight scene. We were going for that level. That *Grandmaster* rain fight scene took a month to film. We did it in six days. And so we're doing incredible things that we're jamming through very short amount of time. First of all, they can only be done with a Hong Kong crew. They can work that fast. And then secondly, the way we're doing it splitting up the drama unit and the fight unit, splitting up the people like that. Otherwise it would be almost impossible to get it done."

From Wushu Pioneer to Asian American Pioneer

With *Into the Badlands*, Wu is the first Asian male in the lead role of a non-comedic American TV show. *Fresh Off the Boat* is an ensemble cast and a comedy. John Cho's failed *Selfie* and Ken Jeong's struggling *Dr. Ken* are also both comedies. Even Pat Morita's short-lived 1976 show *Mr. T and Tina* (a derivation of the *Karate Kid* films) and even Sammo Hung's two-season millennial show *Martial Law* (a derivation of *Rush Hour* films) were also comedies. *Into the Badlands* is all about action and drama, and Wu's character Sunny even has a non-Asian romantic interest in Dr. Veil (Madeleine Mantock).



However, Wu initially balked at taking the lead. "I was brought on board by Stacey Sher to bring authenticity to the martial arts side of the show. And the whole time I was thinking that we should be casting somebody in their late 20s early 30s, so I never really put myself into the equation. And then once the casting process started, which was like a year-and-a-half later after working on the project, we put our feelers out. I think they tested over a 100-something people, and we looked at all the tapes that they liked a lot. And everyone turned to me in the end and said, 'Okay…can you do it?'

"And my major concern was that the proportion of fights per show is about two per episode – two major fights per episode. And I was thinking, first of all, I haven't done martial arts action in a long time. I took a few years of time off from doing it. And secondly, I was already 40 at that point. Can I be able to do that for the next 5 or 6 years if the show does well? I'm not sure if I can do that, so let's cast someone younger, someone who can last that 5 or 6 years. So we sent our feelers out there and they turned back to me because of multiple requirements. The studio definitely wanted the lead to be Asian. They wanted the person to be able to speak perfect English. And they had to know how to act already, to not be a new person, to have martial arts experience, and also have some name. So the number of people you can go to for that is very slim already. In the end, for them the acting was the most important. To me, the martial arts side was really more important, but to them, the acting was much more important. And so we had gone through a lot of martial artists that had no acting experience and they realized that person could not carry a show. And so eventually then, they turned back to me and said, 'Well, can you do it?' I'm like, 'Okay, let me give it a shot.' So when we were auditioning the kid, I read with the kid and the studio saw that and they said, 'Daniel, just do it.'"

Wu has already amassed a very eclectic filmography, even for an Asian star. He's done drama, thrillers, rom-coms, quirky roles, and a wide range of diverse characters. "If you live in Asia, you understand that that's the way things are. To be a successful actor here, you have to be able to do everything. But in the States, it's not like that. Basically, if you do one thing, you do that your whole career. And so I'm out to show that I can do more than just one genre."

The only typical Asian star thing Wu doesn't do is sing and dance. "That's one thing I've avoided my whole career, except for when I made that film *The Heavenly Kings*. That was poking fun at that whole pop idol thing that happens here in Asia where almost every actor does sing and dance." Wu directed that film and won the 2006 Best New Director at the prestigious Hong Kong Film Awards for it. He has also racked up two nominations in both the Hong Kong Film Awards and Taiwan's coveted Golden Horse Film Awards. In 2001, he won the Golden Horse Best Supporting Actor for his role in Jackie's *New Police Story*.

However, it's been hard for Asian male actors to break into Hollywood. Martial artists are the only ones who have really succeeded, but even that has been fraught with challenges and typecasting. Bruce Lee died young. Despite his iconic status today, he didn't live to see the release of his only Hollywood effort, the now classic *Enter the Dragon* (1973). Jackie's Hollywood debut came in 1980 with *The Big Brawl* (a.k.a. *Battle Creek Brawl*). His film career actually started in 1962 as a child actor; he was already credited in over two dozen Chinese films and uncredited in dozens more. Jet's Hollywood debut was as a villain in *Lethal Weapon 4* (1998). He had already been the lead in two dozen Chinese films. Donnie Yen had supporting roles in the *Highlander* and *Blade* franchises near the flip of the millennium, but he's still not recognized outside the martial arts film genre. After over five dozen films, Donnie might finally catch Hollywood's attention next year with *Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon 2* and *Star Wars: Rogue One*.

Unlike Jackie's and Jet's struggle to be taken seriously as dramatic actors, Wu has already played many dramatic roles – with more to come – so he's not worried about being typecast in Hollywood. "The reason why I haven't done martial arts films in a while is because I've seen – you talk about Jackie and a lot of people who wanted to be taken seriously in drama – and I had already opened the path for myself doing drama, as my





"Most of the stuff I'm doing myself."

first film was a big dramatic challenge. I went that way rather than becoming the action star. Being more versatile. If you can play dramatic roles and also fight, then you have a much broader spectrum of things you can go to versus if you start off just doing action and you're only perceived as an action star, it's hard to go back. I ended up doing it that way, being taken more seriously as an actor that can also fight. And also making conscious choices making sure I do dramatic roles versus action ability or action skill, developing a career that way, so I'm not so worried about it. I know I have that talent and that ability behind me, so I can totally turn down roles. I can be stereotyped through *Badlands*, but I can always turn down the other offers that come after that and look for things that are more dramatically challenging. And that's why I'm glad that *Warcraft* is going to come after *Badlands* because that character is really a dramatic role, a motion-capture role. It's not an action-based role at all. So it shows more diversity in terms of my ability skills-wise. And then I go on to another movie, *Geostorm*, which is going to come out after *Warcraft*, which I finished already. It's a big Gerard Butler end-of-the-world type of movie. I play another role that is very, very different than the *Badlands* character. So I'm coming out of the gates consciously choosing a wide range of roles to let people know that I have that ability and I'm not just an action guy."



Wu confidently looks forward to breaking into a brighter Hollywood spotlight. "It's kind of awesome. I've made a couple attempts before in the past to try to come back home and work in the States. And I think at that time, maybe ten years ago, most people in Hollywood were not aware of the Asian market at all in general. In the past few years, you see movies like *Transformers 4* make more money in China than it did in the States or anywhere else in the world. Then you have Hollywood paying attention and now that's driven the catalyst of bringing Asian actors to the States. And I started seeing that happening with other actors, and I'm like, 'Wait, that guy or that girl, she speaks no English and she's doing American product. Maybe I should give this another chance.' And being American-born Chinese, I'm like, 'Wait a minute, I speak English fluently. America is my home. I really should be doing this. I should really be making an effort to come back home and work back home.' I started seriously doing it maybe two years ago, *Warcraft* being one of the first projects. I think *Badlands* is a more amazing project because it kind of highlights everything that I've been trained to be good at in Asia, that I've spent almost twenty years building a career at. As well as being the lead in the project? That's amazing too. AMC is willing to put an Asian-American in the lead of a big huge American show. It shows that their mentality shift has changed a lot. We've moved a long way since *Sixteen Candles* (1984) Long Duk Dong, I guess. So I'm proud to be part of that movement in the American media landscape. Let's see if it works."

The Journey to the West

Into the Badlands is a groundbreaking crossover project for AMC, not just for the West but for the East too. "I know it's definitely being shown in Hong Kong for sure because they've already started asking me for interviews. It's definitely one of AMC's goals is to spread further into the Asian region." Wu says that they've already begun work on Season Two, although AMC hasn't yet green-lit that at this writing.

What's more, back here in America, AMC has launched *Kung Fu Fridays* as a warm-up for *Into the Badlands*. "That was kind of our idea, actually. When we pitched the show, they immediately asked us what would help audiences understand this genre a little better. Well, when I was a kid growing up [in the San Francisco Bay Area], we had Kung Fu Theater, on KTSF, with Tat Mau Wong. Remember that? I grew up watching that and that's how I got my vocabulary of Kung Fu film. They said, 'Yeah, we should do something like that.' So then we suggested a whole bunch of titles for them to acquire and they started playing the Kung Fu Friday thing."

Despite Wu's extensive dramatic background, ultimately *Into the Badlands* comes down to the martial arts. He is coming home, home to America and home to the martial arts that he loves. "At the highest level, we are definitely making the show for people who are enthused by this genre of filmmaking. We really hope that we are pleasing those people. We're really making it for them. A lot of AMC executives had no idea of what martial arts is about so we went and took *carte blanche* and tried to do what we thought was right and what martial artists will think is cool. We're trying to please the higher echelon of the audience – the people who know martial arts and have been watching this stuff since they were kids. If we can impress them, that's our ultimate goal." ☯

For more on *Into the Badlands*, visit AMC's website at www.amc.com/shows/into-the-badlands. For more on Daniel Wu, see another exclusive article on KungFuMagazine.com: *Daniel Wu on INTO THE BADLANDS*.

Into the Badlands Hollywood Premiere - The London, West Hollywood. Photos by Greg Lynch Jr.


Stephen Fung


Aramis Knight, Ally Ioannides


Orla Brady


L-R: Madeleine Mantock, Emily Beecham, Ally Ioannides, Oliver Stark, Sarah Bolger, Orla Brady, Marton Csokas


Emily Beecham


L-R: Charlie Collier, Miles Millar, Susie Fitzgerald (AMC Executive Vice President of Scripted Programming), Al Gough, Jon Favreau (Executive Producer of *Iron Man* and *The Avengers*)


Oliver Stark


Sarah Bolger


Michael Shamberg & Stacy Sher (Executive Producers),


Ally Ioannides, Orla Brady




Madeleine Mantock

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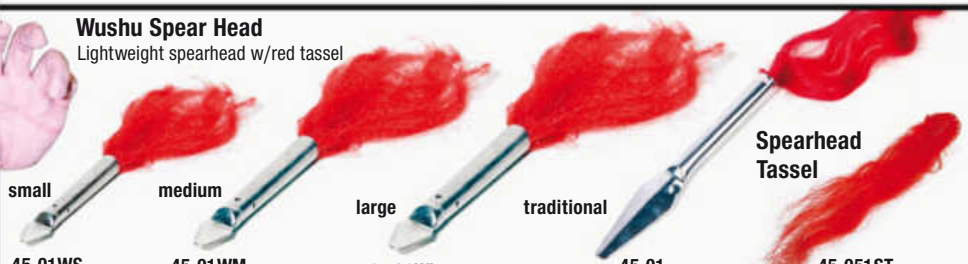
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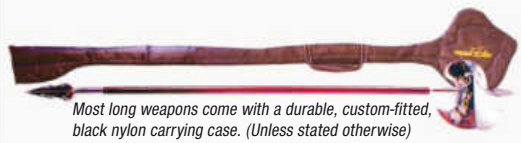
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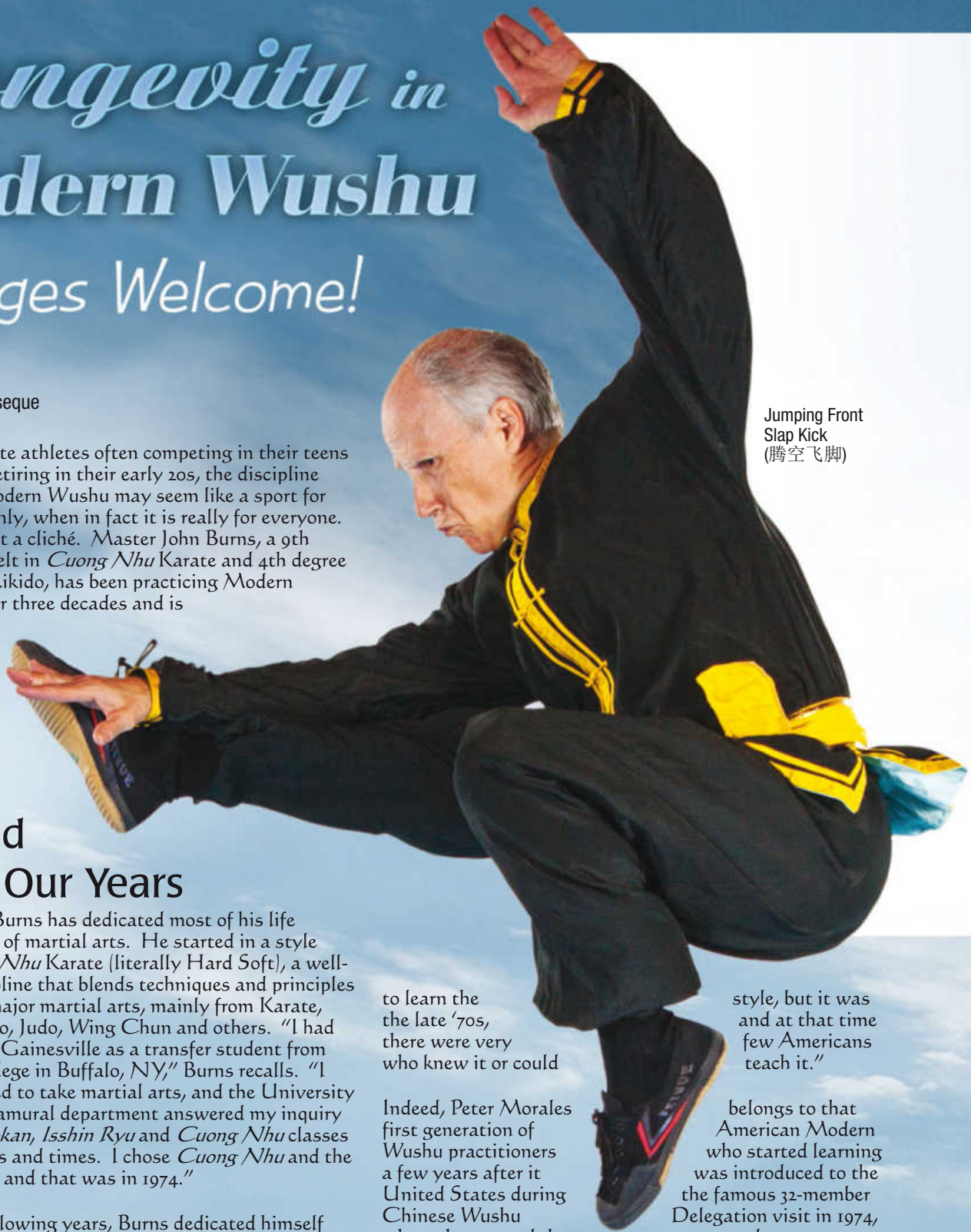
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Longevity in Modern Wushu

All Ages Welcome!

By Emilio Alpanseque

With elite athletes often competing in their teens and retiring in their early 20s, the discipline of Modern Wushu may seem like a sport for the youthful only, when in fact it is really for everyone. This is not just a cliché. Master John Burns, a 9th degree black belt in *Cuong Nhu* Karate and 4th degree black belt in Aikido, has been practicing Modern Wushu for over three decades and is still going strong at the age of 62!



Jumping Front Slap Kick (腾空飞脚)

Years to Our Life and Life to Our Years

Master John Burns has dedicated most of his life to the practice of martial arts. He started in a style called *Cuong Nhu* Karate (literally Hard Soft), a well-rounded discipline that blends techniques and principles from several major martial arts, mainly from Karate, but also Aikido, Judo, Wing Chun and others. "I had just arrived in Gainesville as a transfer student from Canisius College in Buffalo, NY," Burns recalls. "I was determined to take martial arts, and the University of Florida intramural department answered my inquiry offering *Shotokan, Isshin Ryu* and *Cuong Nhu* classes at various days and times. I chose *Cuong Nhu* and the rest is history; and that was in 1974."

During the following years, Burns dedicated himself to the practice of *Cuong Nhu* and eventually became involved in open martial arts tournaments, usually competing in the Open Weapon divisions using *Okinawan* weapons such as the double *tambos* (short sticks), the sai or even the nunchaku; but he noticed that the top places were usually taken by certain competitors who specialized in Modern Wushu. "Yes, at these Open Karate tournaments, there was this guy called Peter Morales, he kept winning every time by doing Wushu forms with the whip chain or the three-sectional staff. I was so impressed by it that I was determined to learn the style, but it was the late '70s, and at that time there were very few Americans who knew it or could teach it."

Indeed, Peter Morales belongs to that first generation of American Modern Wushu practitioners who started learning a few years after it was introduced to the United States during the famous 32-member Chinese Wushu Delegation visit in 1974, where they toured the country and even got to perform for President Nixon in the White House gardens. That visit attracted a lot of attention – magazine articles, books and videotapes – and soon several American martial artists got very interested and began training. It was during this time that individuals like Grandmaster Bow-Sim Mark (麦宝婵), Roger Tung and Anthony Chan became the pioneers in teaching and promoting Modern Wushu in the United States.

In 1980, Burns had the incredible opportunity to train under one of the main coaches of the Beijing Sport University, Professor He Ruihong (何瑞虹). During this era, few foreigners had ventured to China, let alone stay for extended periods of time. Burns lived in the university dorms sharing his room with Fred Whiting of the Canadian National Wushu team.







Master John Burns has dedicated most of his life to the practice of martial arts.

Monkey Staff (猴棍)

A Bit of "Wushu *Yuanfen*"

The Chinese often use the term *Yuanfen* (缘分) to refer to the concept of a predestined affinity, a certain destiny or chance that brings two things together. By the late '70s, Burns had majored in accounting and taken a job with the State Auditor General's Office of the State of Florida. However, he did not enjoy the accounting profession and decided to move to Berkeley, California, to pursue a career as a *Cuong Nhu* instructor. As fate would have it, he stumbled upon the San Francisco Wushu Team. "I moved to Berkeley in 1980, and one day while walking near campus saw a poster announcing a Wushu class by Anthony Chan, exactly the person who taught Peter Morales the flexible weapons! So that is how it all got started. I joined their class at the Hearst Gym at UC Berkeley, and a bit later started going to train with the SF Wushu team in St. Mary's Park on Sundays as well."

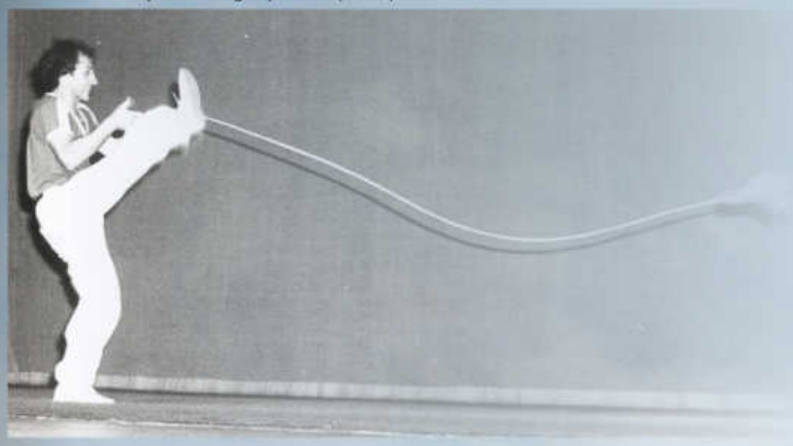
That same year, the Beijing Wushu Team came and toured seven U.S. cities, including San Francisco. Seeing their performance at the Cow Palace ignited Burns' desire to learn the style even more. "The Wushu athletes from China perfectly knew what they were doing. They did so many different forms, bare hand, weapons, and sparring sets. Also they were taught to demonstrate the intent and spirit of fighting behind every move. I personally never looked into Wushu for combat abilities; by then I had already enough experience that I could work out an application from almost any movement. My main interest was around their amazing performance skills and incredibly rich content, which is what really made Wushu stand out."

Drill the Basics, Then Learn the Weapons

Retired from *kata* and *kumite* tournaments since 1979, Burns returned to the competition arena in 1982 in San Jose, this time as a member of the SF Wushu team and possibly being one of the first persons in the U.S. to do a rope dart routine in a tournament setting. Then, between 1983 and 1984, with the help of Anthony Chan, Burns spent over four months learning Modern Wushu at the Beijing Physical Education Institute (北京体育学院),



Burns performing rope dart (绳镖) circa 1982.



"I definitely avoid training through fatigue, and you must learn to respond to peer pressure wisely!

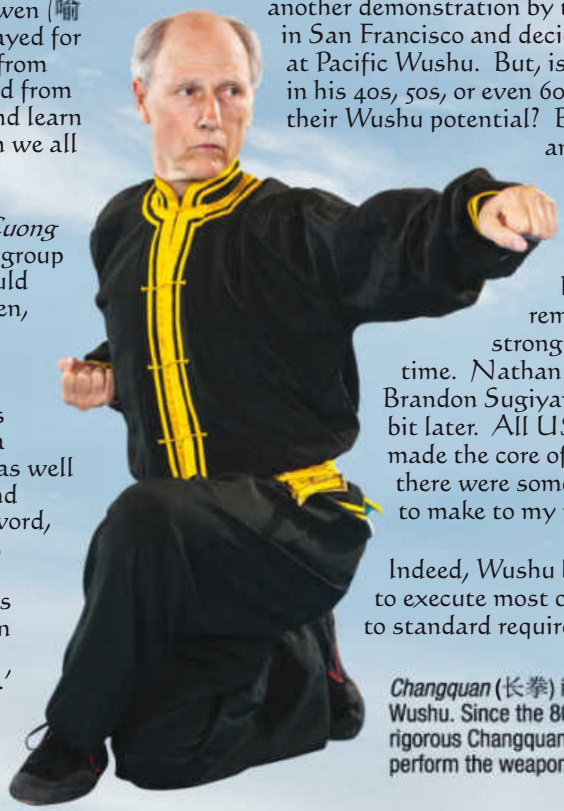
学院), which in 1993 became the Beijing Sport University (北京体育大学). Burns first focused on learning *Changquan* (长拳), in order to be able to get to the weapon forms later. In 1984, the San Francisco Wushu Team brought four coaches from China to train its team. Beijing Wushu Team members Li Xia (李霞), Zhou Jingping (周京萍), Yu Shaowen (喻少文), and Dong Honglin (董洪林) stayed for half a year. Burns learned intensively from them. "Everybody kind of disconnected from their everyday lives to come to class and learn from them. Once they were gone, then we all returned to our normal lives again."

In late 1984, while actively teaching *Cuong Nhu*, Burns started a Wushu training group at Finnish Hall in Berkeley, which would eventually become Pacific Wushu. Then, in 1985, he returned to China for a full month of hard training, and later that year, he founded his *Cuong Nhu* – Rohai Dojo – also in Berkeley. At this point in his career, Burns had secured a strong command of the Wushu basics as well as complete routines in *Changquan* and various weapon styles such as broadsword, staff, three-sectional staff, whip chain, double whip chain, rope dart, double hooks, and monkey staff. "I did 6 years of Wushu intensely, then stopped when Anthony Chan moved to China and the SF Wushu Team kind of 'fell apart.' I gave my Wushu school at Finnish Hall to Phillip Wong and decided to concentrate more in Aikido and Karate for a number of years."

Extending Your Wushu Longevity

In 1999, after a long hiatus of 13 years, Burns saw another demonstration by the Beijing Wushu Team in San Francisco and decided to return to practice at Pacific Wushu. But, is it possible for someone in his 40s, 50s, or even 60s, to regain and maintain their Wushu potential? Burns was over 45 years old and unequivocally aware of the difficulties of keeping up with a class of avid competitors, but that was not going to stop him. In this regard Burns remembers, "There was a very strong group training there at that time. Nathan Tong, Anne and Mae Hsu, Brandon Sugiyama. Joe Scarcella came a bit later. All US National Team members made the core of the group; therefore, I knew there were some adjustments that I needed to make to my practice in order to succeed."

Indeed, Wushu basics can be very extreme; to execute most of the movements according to standard requires great agility, balance,



Changquan (长拳) is the foundational style of Modern Wushu. Since the 80s until now, Burns follows a very rigorous Changquan program in order to be able to perform the weapon forms properly.



With American Wushu pioneer Anthony Chan, who taught many students such as Gary Toy, John Chuck, Peter Morales, and others.



With Beijing Wushu Team member Zhou Jingping (周京萍).



Jumping Inside Kick or Tornado Kick (旋风叫)

coordination, and flexibility of the muscles, ligaments, and joints. While ensuring proper skill technique at all times, certain changes had to be made to the variety and intensity of the training. "I no longer aim my kicks to my forehead like I used to. The main idea is not to overuse or hyperextend any part of my body during any movement; there is really no need for that, and that is clearly not good for you. And I have to add that before each class. I warm up by kicking the bag at my dojo for 30 minutes; it is a warmup before for the warmup."

Minimizing the Wear-and-Tear

The next adjustment Burns does is during the basics jumps. "I can still land some of the jump kicks on the kicking leg if I want to, but during regular practice I try to land on both legs most of the time, with my body weight centered and controlled. I wear insoles inside my shoes to provide some arch support, and I also use knee braces during class, which I feel helps with keeping my knees warm and more secure." This is particularly important because the large majority of reported Wushu injuries happen during the execution of landings, and studies also show that injured athletes 45 and older recover between 15 to 18 percent more slowly than similarly injured athletes in their 20s.



Double Hooks (双钩)

In regards to injury prevention, Burns avows, "I definitely avoid training through fatigue, and you must learn to respond to peer pressure wisely! It doesn't matter who is in front of you, or what is everybody doing in class. You must focus on keeping the desired effort level throughout the session; you are not there to impress anyone. You must not expect to be able to endure a class like you used to 10 or 20 years ago, and keep the proper mindset to accept



Burns showing perfect form while executing a flawless butterfly twist (旋子转体). This difficulty movement was introduced to Modern Wushu in the late 70s by addin a horizontal 360-degree body spin to the standard butterfly kick. Later, in the early 80s, Chinese gymnast Tong Fei (童非) introduced the same movement to the worl Olympic gymnastics floor exercise.

this fact naturally. If the kids do 10 consecutive jumps, maybe you just do 4, and still feel great about it." These are great recommendations for avoiding both acute and overuse injuries that can develop slowly over time due to repetitive stress on tendons, muscles, or joints.

Nutrition is another important factor to consider, not only for aging athletes but for everybody in general. Burns believes that strict vegan nutrition can help. "Nowadays it's not too uncommon to hear athletes trying a vegan diet – just uncommon for them to stick with it. I have refrained to consume animal products since the '70s and feel that this could have had an impact on my martial arts training and fitness levels in general. I first heard about veganism while doing some research on how to become a better athlete by training smarter and eating better; and after learning how our bodies process animal products like meat, I simply didn't want to continue doing that anymore."

Optimize Training and Never Stop

Developing and maintaining peak performance in Modern Wushu as we age may not be as complicated as it seems; it just requires a balanced plan of action, realistic goals, good nutrition, proper rest, together with high motivation – a passion for the art – and lots of perseverance. As Burns asserts, "I believe that perhaps the most important secret to Wushu longevity is to



Three-sectional Staff (三节棍)



Practicing Monkey Staff (猴棍) with Beijing Wushu Team member Yu Shaowen (喻少文).

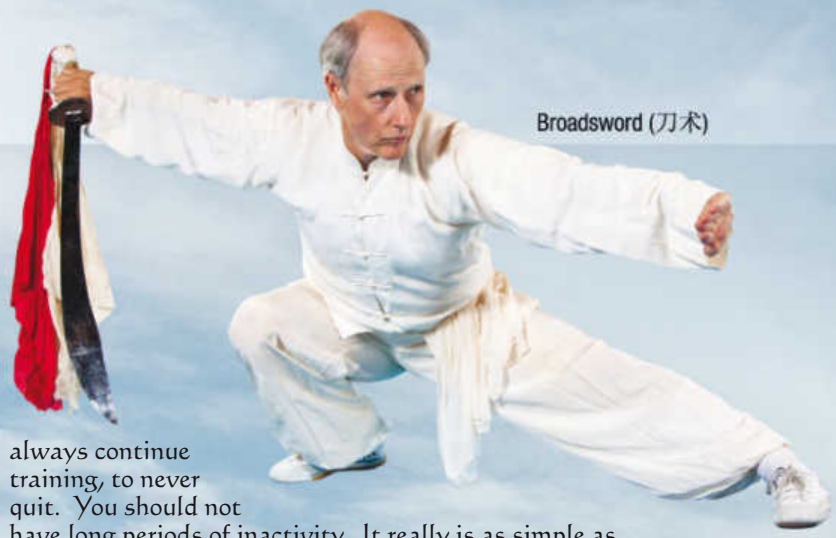
"I believe that perhaps the most important secret to Wushu longevity is to always continue training, to never quit.











Broadsword (刀术)

always continue training, to never quit. You should not have long periods of inactivity. It really is as simple as 'use it or lose it.' I did stop formal Wushu training for 13 years, but I was still very active with my other martial arts and would practice my weapon sets from time to time. Once I came back to Wushu class, then I never stopped again. I thought I was going to retire at 50, then at 60, but I kept going. Another year, another birthday. But then, I know there is class on Saturdays, and I got to show up!"☯

John Burn's Rohai Dojo website is RohaiDojo.com. Emilio Alpanseque teaches in El Cerrito, CA, and can be contacted through his website at EastBayWushu.com

The Quest of a Martial Knight

By Gigi Oh and Gene Ching

Most westerners who practice Kung Fu were first inspired by martial arts movies. Many cut their teeth on Bruce Lee, Jackie Chan, Jet Li, and vintage films such as those from Shaw Brothers studios. However, for native Chinese, it was different. Kung Fu is so deeply woven throughout Chinese culture that the movies are more of a product then a source. Kung Fu is found throughout Chinese history, literature, opera and art. It's even in children's bedtime stories. While westerners might fantasize about being a kick-ass fighter like they saw on the silver screen, in China, that desire can come from a deeper place.

In Chinese culture, martial knights, or *wuxia* (武俠), figure prominently in literature, plays and opera – the precursors to Kung Fu movies. *Xia* means a chivalrous person like a knight-errant (*wu* means martial, as in Wushu). This is a little more profound than what defines a typical movie hero, or even just a good fighter. The medieval notion of chivalry is universal. Though often only loosely codified (honor, courage, justice, courtesy, along with a readiness to help the weak), it is a standard by which noble knights and *wuxia* must abide.

Xu Xiangdong (徐向东) read *wuxia* novels as a child. This motivated him to pursue Modern Wushu, becoming a leading champion in the '80s and subsequently a movie star. Today, he still strives to uphold that *wuxia* code, to exemplify the adage, "Preserve the pairing of scholarly and martial (*wen wu shuang quan* 文武雙全)." However, masters of his era faced unique challenges never before seen by Kung Fu ancestors. He bore witness to the oppression of the Cultural Revolution and the rise of Modern Wushu. He was there when traditional Kung Fu was nearly lost. And today, as it continues to face new challenges, he continues the fight to perpetuate it.







From Opera to Modern Wushu, by Way of Some Old School Kung Fu

Xu was born in Hebei Province in 1961. At age nine he began his martial arts training in the rigorous and strict academy of Beijing opera. Traditional Chinese opera has an incalculable influence on Kung Fu, even today. Chinese opera is quite different than European opera. Although both have lavish costumes and demanding classical songs, Chinese opera also stages a lot of fight scenes that require show-stopping acrobatics. Most of the leading pioneers of Kung Fu cinema came from opera, including Jackie Chan, Sammo Hung, Yuen Woo Ping and many more. Even Bruce Lee was influenced by opera, as both of his parents were opera performers. However, Xu wasn't happy with that start. "Since I had a good high-pitched voice, I was learning to be a *xiaosheng* (a young beardless male character 小生). The physical training included a lot of martial art training such as horse stance and leg-pressing to train my flexibility. But I didn't like it. The training was too harsh. The elder kids often bullied the younger kids. The younger kids had to clean the urine pots. They did not allow me to go home. I begged my parents to withdraw me from the school."

The Cultural Revolution started in 1966 and lasted for a decade. Traditional arts like opera and Kung Fu fell under the "Four Olds" (*si jiu* 四旧) – old customs, culture, habits, and ideas considered anti-proletariat. Though still very young, Xu was not persuaded away from Kung Fu despite the oppression and propaganda. "Due to the influence of *wuxia* novels, I still dreamed of becoming a *wuxia*. One day in the park, I heard a loud noise like a machine digging in the ground. When I went closer, I saw a man practicing *Xingyi* (形意), pounding on a wall to practice *piquan* (chopping fist 劈拳). Later, an elder man came and taught this person some movements. To me, he looked just like a *gaoseng* (high monk 高僧) from a *wuxia* novel. I asked him to teach me, but he refused. At that time, my mother was a local government human resources official in charge of job placement. One day, he came to my mom's office looking for work. After that, he agreed to teach me.

That master was Li Fuyuan (李福源), a specialist in *Xingyiquan* and *Gongliquan* (功力拳) who had studied under the renowned *Xingyi* exponent, Ce Yizai (1833–1914)(车毅斋). Master Li was an old school master who taught things the hard way. "He told me, 'You should not start with *Xingyiquan*. You are too soft. You lack power. You can start by coming in the morning and punching me in my stomach.' He wanted me to punch him a hundred times at first. But after only a few dozen punches, I had no strength left. He insisted that I finish the hundred punches each day. Then, gradually, we increased to five hundred punches. After that, I started learning *jibengong* (basic training 基本功), which included handstands, horse stance, leg presses, and so on." It was similar to his opera training, but without the urine pots.

Even though the Cultural Revolution was only half over, Modern Wushu had already begun to emerge. At first it was almost a compromise, a way for traditional Kung Fu to be showcased as a modern sport. New forms were created and standardized to heighten the spectacle and make it easier to judge. In the latter part of 1970, Xu's hometown of Zhangjiakou was forming a Wushu Team to compete in the Hebei Province Wushu Tournament. "But the Kung Fu I had learned could not be used for competition. My teacher did not know any competition *Taolu* (forms 套路) either. So he found a Wushu Competition Routine textbook for the Beginner *Taolu* 1 and 2, published by the Chinese Wushu Association. He studied it while teaching me. When the Hebei Wushu Team coach saw my performance, he asked me to try out for the team. I went in the summer of 1971. It was a brutal selection camp. We started with more than a hundred boys. Every day, he cut some kids. One month later, I was the only boy left."





The Eternal Battle of Traditional versus Modern

Xu's firm foundation in traditional Kung Fu gave him a step up on his teammates. Keep in mind that this was during the '70s when the sport of Modern Wushu was still in its infancy. It was much closer to traditional Kung Fu back then, closer to its origin. However, there were still differences that made the transition challenging. "After I finally made the team, I started learning Wushu. It was difficult for me because most Wushu kicks required me to kick really high, and this was often connected with a jump. For example, take *ertijiao* (double kick 二踢脚). The way I trained in the past was two quick kicks – one aims at the opponent's groin and the other to the opponent's throat. One was a fake and the other was real, depending upon the opponent's response. But in Wushu, both kicks need to be high kicks. And you need to stay in the air for a few seconds, which is opposite to what you want to do in real combat. When a person stays in the air, there is no root. It's dangerous and hard to defend yourself. I finally nailed it."



Xu Xiangdong with the Prime Minister of Fiji, Frank Bainimarama.

During the Cultural Revolution, and persisting after, competitors were not ranked first, second and third, but rather by level. Several athletes would be acknowledged as top tier, several as second tier, and so on. This style of award presentation persists to this day in China, especially in tournaments open to foreigners. So when a team returns home from China with a gold medal, or even several gold medals, that doesn't necessarily mean that they placed first. "From '78 to '80, there weren't very many martial art competitions. The only significant one was the National Wushu Competition, and all the winners were professional Wushu athletes. That made the folk traditional martial arts people unhappy. Hebei is known for its martial arts and traditional martial arts are very prosperous there. Therefore, there were many folk traditional martial artists who came to challenge the Hebei Wushu team members. To prepare for these challenges, we trained *Taolu* on Monday, Wednesday and Friday and *Sanda* (sparring 散打) on Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday. Sanda has many good combat techniques. The folk traditional masters had many good combat techniques too, but the professional team members were younger, stronger, and faster. We were in better physical condition. So most of the time, the challengers went back in defeat."



By 1979, tournaments had resumed with ranking athletes as first, second and third. Xu got up on the podium, placing third in the Group "A" Male First Routine Competition. Jet Li (李连杰) won first and Zhao Changjun (赵长军) took second. Following that, Xu won first place in many divisions including Eagle Claw, Eagle Claw *duilian* (opposing practice or partner *taolu* 对练), three-person *taolu*, *qiangshu* (spear 槍术), *jianshu* (sword 劍术), and *zuijian* (drunken sword 醉劍). Between 1980 and 1985, Xu earned the nickname "King of Eagle Claw," and in the '80s, the Hebei Male Wushu Team were champions. "I think I won because of the many years of traditional training under Master Li Fuyuan. All his



teachings, especially the lyrics, artistry and mindset, were able to be expressed through my movements. The charm and verve of traditional Kung Fu added a special flavor to my *Taolu*, just like the finishing brush stroke on a painting makes it vivid. This is why after many Wushu athletes retire from competition, they don't pursue the martial arts life any further. I came from tradition and I returned to it. I know that traditional martial arts are deep and abundant. My teacher once told me, 'After you reach thirty, you should stop Modern Wushu and go back to traditional.' I went back to my hometown and trained under Master Li whenever I could until he passed away in 1990. After I came to Beijing, I needed a local teacher. I studied under others including Grandmaster Sun Jianyun (1914–2003)(孫劍雲), the daughter of Sun style Taiji founder Sun Lutang (1860–1933)(孫祿堂), and renowned Yang Style Taiji Grandmaster Fu Zhongwen (1903–1994)(傅钟文), and many more.

Like many of the national Wushu champions of the '80s, Xu also followed his competitive career with making movies. He had the lead role in the largely underrated film *Holy Robe of Shaolin Temple* (1985)(木棉袈裟), and starred in several others over the years including *Wing Chun* (2006)(詠春), *Champions* (2011)(奪標), and *White Vengeance* (2011)(鴻門宴傳奇).



"The Three Musketeers;" Ji Chunhua, Xu Xiangdong and Yu Chenghui.

Not a Basket Case

With so many diverse styles, from Modern Wushu to traditional folk styles, it's easy to be overwhelmed by the Chinese martial arts. There is so much available, so many evocative styles and systems, especially within the realm of traditional folk Kung Fu. "During the '70s, interaction and exchange between masters and practitioners was very popular, open and free. There was no tuition required. If I wanted to learn a form, I could just go knock on the master's door and ask him or her to teach me. Most of the masters were very friendly, open and willing to share."

What helped Master Xu is an eidetic memory for forms. Perhaps this is due to his solid traditional foundation. Or perhaps he is just gifted. "I have a very good memory. I can watch a performance once, follow one time, and then I can play back the form. In 1974, during the National Wushu Championship, I learned 30 *taolu* in one day. At that time, the main purpose of the competition was to exchange knowledge. The first place winner only received a paper certificate and not a penny more as an award. On the Hebei team, there was a 78-year-old Chaquan (查拳) master named Yang Qisheng (杨其生). He was the martial brother of Zhang Wenguang (张文广). In order for him to remember all of his taolu, he practiced 10 different *taolu* every day and it would take him a week to complete all of the *taolu* that he knew. He called himself a *quan louzi* (boxing basket 拳搂子). It suddenly hit me that I did not want to become a *quan louzi*. I realized that if you learn quickly, you will forget quickly, unless you keep practicing. So I stopped learning more *taolu*.

"I also realized that *taolu* are only the outside shapes. If you don't go deeper to understand, if you only polish the outside, it's not going to be useful to you. I decided to dig deeper. After I graduated from the Beijing Sports University in 1988, I took a position with the Chinese Wushu Administration Center Education Research Department. I have been a martial arts researcher until today. I thought Chinese martial arts should spread outside of my own country, so in 1992 I went to France for two years to further my research. My doctoral thesis at the Université Paris Diderot was a comparison between the sports movements in China and France. But soon I discovered I should have just stayed at home to do the research on Chinese martial arts."

Still Striving

For the last twenty years, Master Xu has continued his research on Chinese martial arts. He has visited many Chinese villages to study traditional folk masters. And Xu still strives to further his own practice, studying under renowned Wu Taiji Grandmaster Ma Changxun (马长勋). "I work in hopes that more people can understand how to effectively use the principles behind all Chinese forms, especially in real-life combat situations." ☯

Xu Xiangdong can be reached at cccwushu@sina.com



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the SOFT APPROACH

The Art of Seizing

By Arnaldo Ty Núñez



The forefathers of Taijiquan were typically simple men of modest means; however, they had a high level of awareness of consciousness and the environment based upon hands-on experience. The intricate art they developed has many complex components, which can be overwhelming to a modern-day practitioner. One particular skill (技) or attack (击) is the art of seizing.

The art of seizing is usually referred to as *Qinna* (擒拿), which means to capture and seize. Seizing is a very intricate skill that is difficult to execute correctly. Even if one executes a lock on an opponent, that does not necessarily mean that it is effective. If one executes the lock using upper body strength (*li* 力), the technique will be hasty and rough (too substantial), rather than being based on patience or softness. By being overly solid, one gives the opponent ample opportunity to counter the technique by using suppleness. This is due to the notions of being relaxed (松) and using energy (劲): "There seem to exist one kind of energy, which is powerful; it is able to comply [counterattack], which is due to its flexibility [relaxed state of being]." –Xu, Zhiyi (若有一種勁. 能隨敵勁以為伸縮. – 徐致一)

The energy (*jin*) implies a notion of totality, of oneness of the body when executing a technique. A true seizing technique must balance *li* and *jin*, and utilize the principles of Taiji, to be effective. Without it, the technique can be easily reversed by an opponent who possesses the ability of *jin*:

"Taijiquan is relaxed; therefore, one needs to train it [energy] to be able to release it. Therefore, supple [relaxed] allows one to harness the internal energy power." –Chen, Weiming (太極拳是鬆散練出. 乃柔帶剛之眞內勁也. – 陳微明)

Taijiquan from its very beginnings has held this unique attribute within its quiver. But this skill, like many others, has been forgotten with time, weakening the pugilistic component of Taijiquan. This was due to the popularization of Taiji (especially Yang and Wu style) in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Because of its obscurity, Chen style Taijiquan never sacrificed its pugilistic nature for commerciality. Yet were it not for this sacrifice made by other Taiji styles, Taijiquan would not be a household word across the whole globe. Thus, this sacrifice must be viewed as a true *jian* (double-edged sword) notion.



1.Shifu Lenny Aaron and opponent stand in Cross Arm Guard (问护手防).



3. At this point Shifu Aaron twists the wrist, which converts into Detain Wrist (扣腕), and simultaneously executes a Side-of Tread-on Leg (侧踹腿).



2. Opponent throws a Level Strike (平搥), which Shifu Aaron intercepts with Seizing Hand (搂手).



4. Shifu Aaron continues to add pressure to the opponent's wrist.

The Components of Seizing

Qinna is the art of manipulating someone's body against themselves, be it by breaking a bone, tearing muscles or ligaments, stopping the flow of blood or oxygen, or pressing nerve cavities. Let's examine the components that make up the art of seizing:

1. Dividing Muscles (分筋) is the theory of tearing muscles or tendons. This is achieved by twisting an arm or limb. The twist will divide the muscles. An example can be found among the many seizing techniques of Lift Hand (提手), Cloud Hand (云手), Brush Knee (搂膝), etc.

2. Grabbing Muscles (抓筋) is the theory of grasping muscles. The Brush Knee posture introduces this notion indirectly. The lead hand executes a seizing hand (to be explained shortly), while the rear hand grasps the assailant's triceps and pulls or tears at them. The technique is very direct – just grasp the opponent's triceps muscle, inner thigh muscle, etc.



1. Shifu Steve Contes stands in Open Guard (开防), while opponent stands in Cross Arm Guard.



2. Shifu Contes intercepts a Level Strike with Seizing Hand, while slipping his left arm upward.



3. Shifu Contes executes a Cutting Palm (切掌) level against his chest, which becomes the fulcrum to execute the Elbow Press (压肘).

3. Cross Bone (错骨) is the theory of breaking bones. This can be found in various postures, such as Tall, Stretch-Forward (touch) Horse (高探马). In this case you do not hit the forehead, but the elbow itself. In Cloud Hand, an exponent can break an opponent's elbow by executing an Elbow Press (压肘).

4. Point Hole (点穴) is the theory of hitting pressure points. The objective here to press an acupressure point on a restrained opponent to create a painful or paralyzing nerve shock to the system. For example, Planting Strike (栽捶) can be executed in a more subtle way than a blow, as a press to an acupuncture point.

5. Hold Pulse (拿脉) is the theory of holding arteries. This is an intricate notion where the exponent must have deep knowledge of the arteries/vein locations upon the body. The objective is to stop the circulation of oxygen to a particular area of the body. The easiest method is by grasping or pressing on the throat. The arteries in the arms can also be targeted to cause numbing, but this is an intricate and subtle technique, relying not on physical strength but a very precise grasp. Hold Pulse requires many years of practice to achieve any significant skill, especially on a non-cooperating opponent.

6. Closing Air (闭气) is the theory of closing the meridian line/Pass-Through Web (经络). This theory coincides with Hold Pulse. The notion of the meridian is complex, because of its close association with the notion of *qi* (气), which is still being studied and defined by Western science/medicine. *Qi* can be defined as bioelectrical energy circulating throughout one's body. The objective is to stop the flow of energy to a certain area of the body – which coincides with Point Hole – to create an electric shock in the body, which can be very painful to some. As with Hold Pulse, Closing Air is very hard to master, and sadly it is so often misinterpreted and sensationalized as to have lost its merit. The theory exists, but is not as dramatic as so often portrayed.

Seizing Techniques in Push Hand

Seizing techniques can be found within one's sequence (*lu* 路) or in Push Hand (*tuishou* 推手). The elders left them nicely tucked away. But you need a shifu (師父) knowledgeable in this particular area, which is sadly harder to find than the techniques themselves. This article is intended to serve as a sign post to help show the way and show what to look for. But words cannot be a substitute for human touch. That's where the next component comes in: Push Hand.

Continued on page 74

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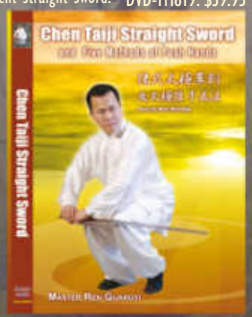
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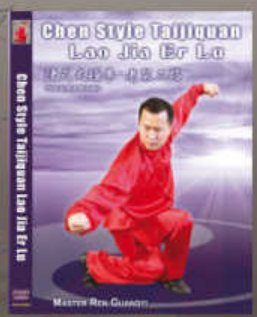
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Continued from page 72: Soft Approach

"We may ask ourselves: what came first, the chicken or the egg?"

We may ask ourselves: what came first, the chicken or the egg? Okay, it was the chicken, who mutated to have an egg, but then the egg became the new breed of chicken. Therefore, without Tuishou you have no seizing skill.

Within the lu you have all the openings for all the seizing techniques, but not the conclusions. What this means is that, in the lu, you have the particular setup for a seizing technique, but with more than one possibility. There is no definite finish, because the opponent can choose what comes next.

This is hard, because ideally we want a sure thing. But seizing does not work like that; it is ever changing – be it fast to slow, solid to non-solid, soft to hard, etc. Patience is a prerequisite to achieving any true effect or skill. That is why Push Hand is crucial, because it allows a practitioner to sense for openings and execute the best conclusion to a given situation. At the same time, the partner is learning to neutralize or counter your technique, which creates a win for both.

Starting Push Hand

Single Push Hand (单推手) is ideal for the beginner for a lot of reasons; for example, it teaches Listening Energy Skill (听劲技), which is essential for applying a seizing technique or getting out of one, but takes time to develop. Your body needs to be aware of whether your opponent is solid or weak. If weak, you need to strike him to loosen his grip or to set up your own proper technique.

You must also develop the ability to seize or hold someone, referred to as Plucking (采) your opponent's arm. There are four grasping methods: seizing (搂), embracing (抱), lifting (挑), and grasping (抓). In Single Push Hand, you can practice any one of these holds.



Seizing is a gateway to many possibilities; however, one needs patience and diligence in one's practice. There is no need to look for technique, as it will find you...

When starting out, Seizing Hand (搂手) is recommended, because it works on a horizontal plane and leads the opponent away from one's body. Always protect yourself in a confrontation; you do not want to be too near the opponent, as this allows him to counter your technique and attack, or, worse, use a bladed weapon against you. Keeping some distance also assists in securing good leverage over the opponent, allowing the seizing technique to be more effective.

The next step is a very basic method of Double Push Hands (双推手) consisting of one wrist sticking to the partner's wrist while the other hand cups the partner's elbows. At this point the lead hand rotates to execute an Embracing Fist (抱拳) or hold, which allows the rear hand (cupping the elbow) to convert to a Covering Palm (盖掌), which now presses on the elbow. This is referred to as Pressing Elbow (压肘), which can be executed with the forearm too.

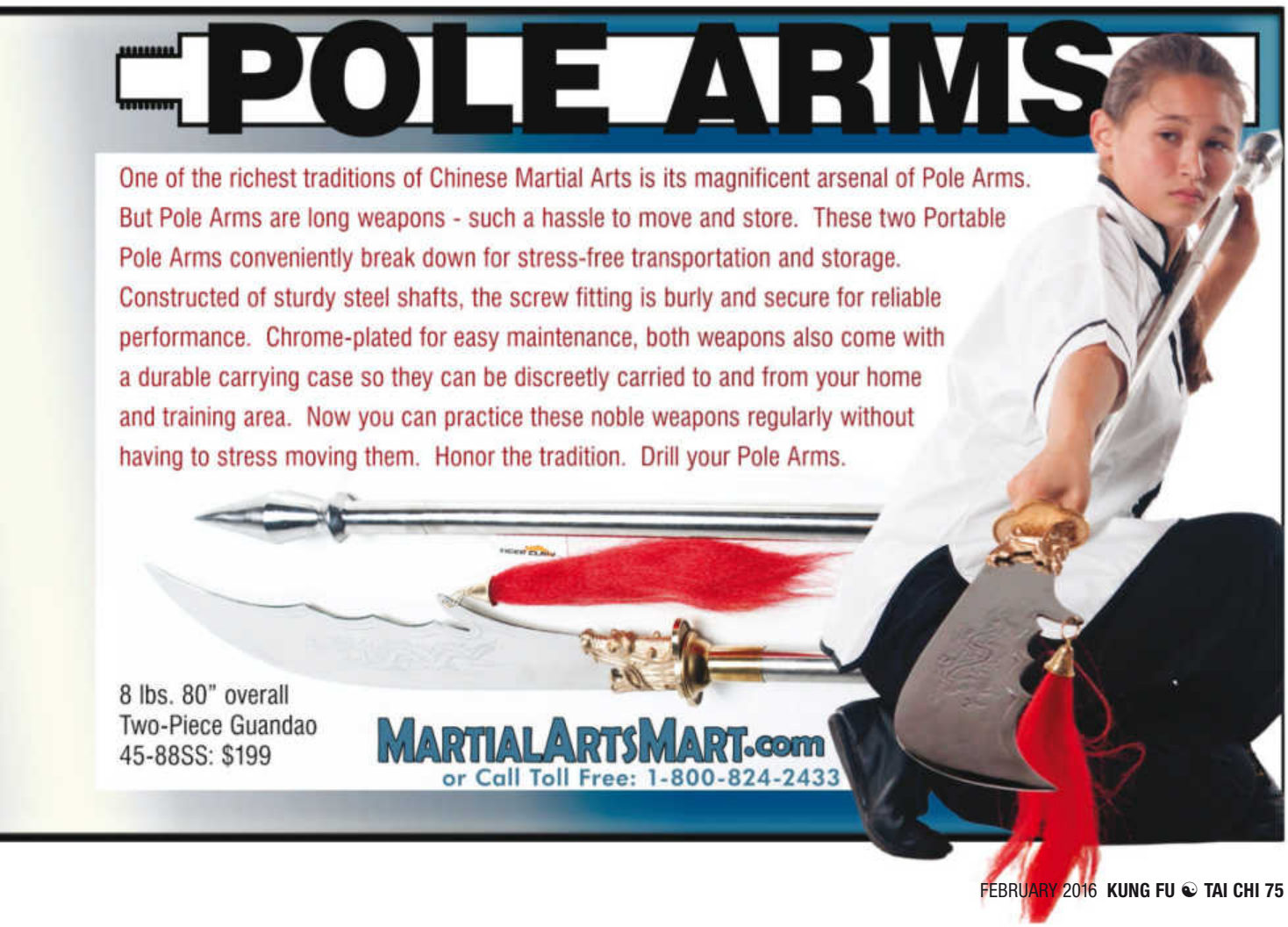
This particular method is extracted from Cloud Hand.

Key Concepts for Beginners

The beginner should focus on presses, which are common in an actual confrontation. While this method must be performed in real time to be effective, it requires much practice to develop it to the point where it becomes second nature. A practitioner will also need to practice secondary exercises, such as to strengthen one's grasp, to make it viable.

After pressing, a practitioner moves on to Wraps (缠), where the objective is to tangle an opponent's limb by using one's arm as the fulcrum and dislocate the opponent's limb, or tear muscles or ligaments, or execute throws, or even break bones.

In the beginning, go slow. Feel out your opponent.





1. Shifu Dan Djurdjevic and opponent stand in Cross Arm Guard (问护手防).



2. Shifu Djurdjevic intercepts a Level Strike with Seizing Hand, and executes an Elbow Press.



3. Now Shifu Djurdjevic reverses the press into Shifting Elbow (搬肘), i.e., wrap.

When you sense an opening, go for it: execute the technique. The opponent's job is to dissolve the lock, such as by relaxing. If he is successful, he may set up one of his own seizing techniques on you. This particular drill is interesting for both practitioners, because both learn crucial elements that could reappear in real life. Hopefully these acquired skills/attributes will secure your safety in an actual encounter.

Seizing is a gateway to many possibilities; however, one needs patience and diligence in one's practice. There is no need to look for technique, as it will find you...

"Trying to anticipate energy power [source] should not be so tremendously early; if too early, you would accidently utilize strength, which would become a [bad] habit, which would prevent you in obtaining intricate intent [skill]." – Chen, Weiming (找勁不可太早。太早則喜用力成為習慣不能得精巧之意。– 陳微明) ☯

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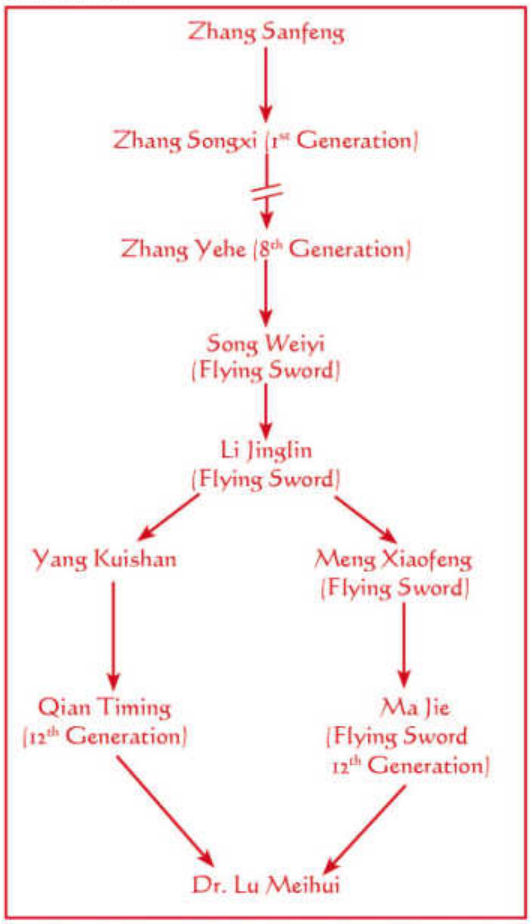
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FLYING SWORD

By Amante P. Mariñas I

There is a dearth of information on knife throwing in the Chinese martial arts. However, the book *The Major Methods of Wudang Sword* written by Huang Yuan-xiou (translated by Dr. Lu Mei-hui in 2010) has a peripheral reference to knife throwing. It traces the lineage of the *Fei jian* (flying sword 飛劍) techniques from its beginning through the 12th generation (see below).

The Wudang sword techniques were created in the Wudang Mountains by the Daoist master Zhang San-feng. His nine disciples became heads of their own branches of Wudang martial arts. The first three branches (*pai* 派) focused on cultivating internal power (*nei gong* 內功); the next three, on the use of throwing knives; the last three, on Wudang sword techniques.



An abridged lineage of the flying sword based on a narrative in Dr. Lu Mei-hui's translation of the work by the Chinese master Huang Yuan-xiou.

The flying sword throwing techniques passed from the great master Zhang San-feng to Master Ma Jie (born 1925). It is not clear if Master Ma Jie passed them to Dr. Lu Mei-hui.

The flying sword was described by Master Huang Yuan-xiou as "throwing daggers in the shape of tiny swords…" for attacking from a distance. In another book, *Ancient Chinese Hidden Weapons* (Douglas H. Y. Hsieh, 1985), the flying sword is described as "a small sword used to attack the opponent from a distance." Hsieh's flying sword was 8 inches long and weighed 5 ounces.

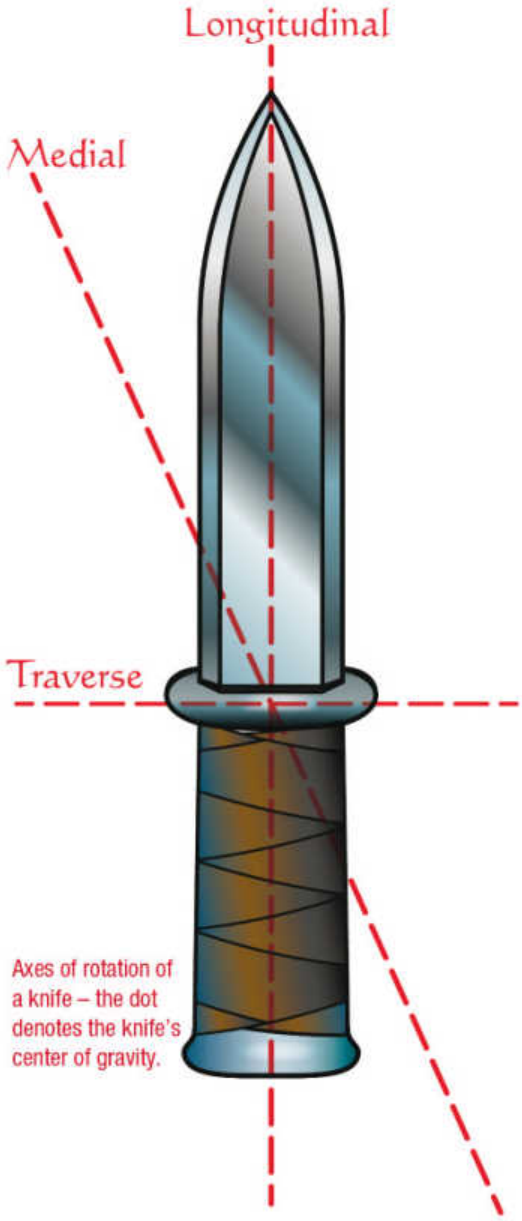
The descriptions of the flying sword by Huang Yuan-xiou and Douglas H. Y. Hsieh closely correlate. Hence, it is not too farfetched to assume that they were describing the same flying sword. According to Douglas H. Y. Hsieh, the flying sword was introduced in the Tang Dynasty (7th–10th century).

Hsieh gave detailed descriptions of 29 ancient Chinese hidden weapons, giving their dimensions, weights, and the distances from which they are thrown. However, he gave no description of the grips used or of the techniques of throwing the flying sword.

This article will fill the gaps, helping to explain the methods/techniques of throwing the flying sword or any knife. But first one needs an understanding of how a knife behaves as it travels toward a target.

Spin

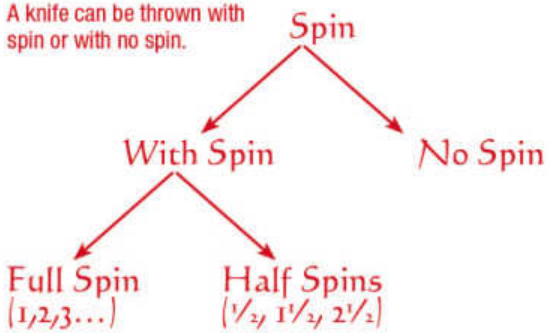
Any thrown object will trace a parabolic trajectory through the air and rotate around three mutually perpendicular axes at its center of gravity (right). The resulting rotation is commonly known as "spin." In knife throwing, spin is defined in relation to the point of the knife.

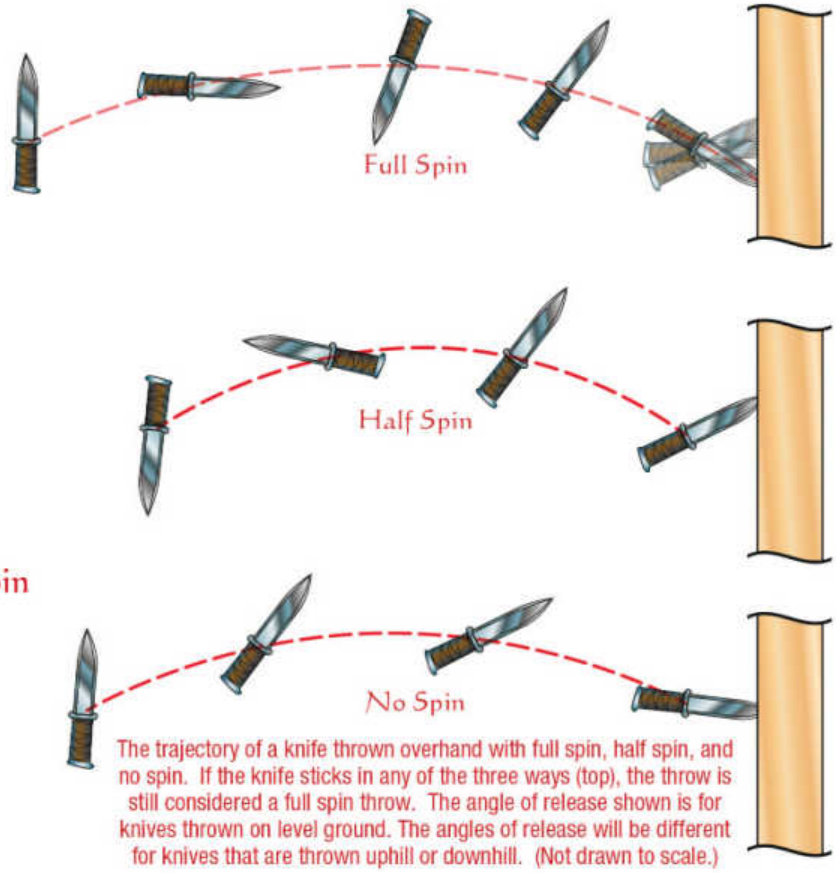


Axes of rotation of a knife – the dot denotes the knife's center of gravity.

A knife can be thrown with full spin, half spin, or no spin (See Diagrams). In the "with spin" throw (full or half), the knife can be held by the blade or by the handle; in the "no spin" throw, by the handle. Full spin does not mean a 360° rotation. Half spin does not mean a 180° rotation. 3rd illustration (No Spin) shows a knife that has rotated 90°. However, it is still considered to have been thrown with no spin. The same concept applies to the full spin and half spin throws.

A knife can be thrown with spin or with no spin.



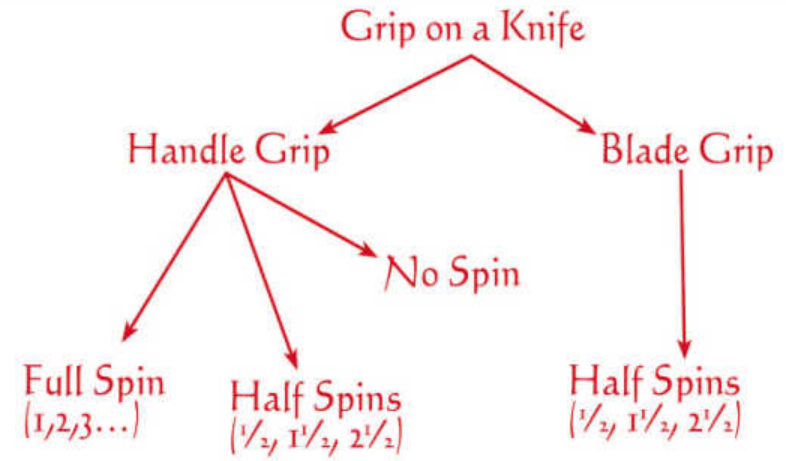


The trajectory of a knife thrown overhand with full spin, half spin, and no spin. If the knife sticks in any of the three ways (top), the throw is still considered a full spin throw. The angle of release shown is for knives thrown on level ground. The angles of release will be different for knives that are thrown uphill or downhill. (Not drawn to scale.)

What Is the Best Knife to Throw?

Knives are thrown as a form of relaxation, for fun, in competition, as a profession, or for personal defense. Whatever the purpose, weight and length are very important factors in selecting a throwing knife. A heavier knife will ensure deep penetration. A longer knife will allow a good grip.

Knife catalogs rarely list the weights of their throwing knives. If you buy from a catalog, the length of the knife will give you some idea of the weight. The longer it is, the heavier it will likely be. Heavier knives are better for the underhand throw. Even light knives can be made to stick consistently when thrown overhand. The lighter a knife is, the more difficult it is to throw underhand. (Note that 5–5 ¼ oz. baseballs are thrown overhand and that 6 ¼–7 oz. softballs are thrown underhand.)





Right: Grip on the 10¾" AK-47 bayonet – held by the handle it can be thrown underhand with half spin or overhand with a full spin. Use a blade grip for the half spin overhand throw.



Grip used on a 6" Japanese shuriken for the no spin throw.

Most shurikens are light and short. They are normally thrown overhand and are gripped in a different way.



Grip used on a 6" Chinese flying dart for the no spin throw.

Knives that are 8–10 inches long will be good for both overhand and underhand throws. Note that professional knife-throwers use dull-edged knives as long as 16 inches and as heavy as 14 oz.

How Do I Hold the Knife?

Double-edged knives have to be thrown by the handle. Single- or dull-edged knives can be thrown by the handle or by the blade. Blade-heavy knives are thrown by the handle; handle-heavy knives, by the blade.



Targets used in European knife-throwing competitions (courtesy of Dr. Christian Thiel).

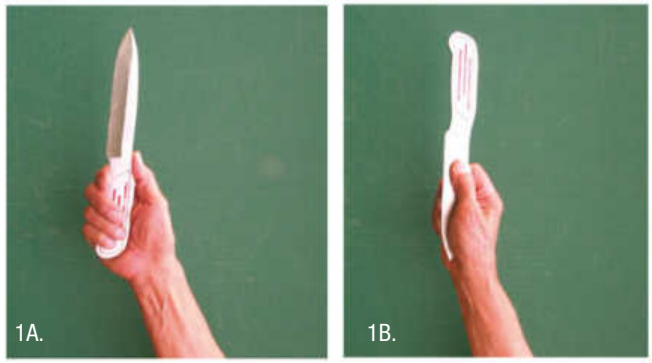


Figure 1. Grips on the single-edged 10" VM Bulalakaw (designed by the author and was marketed by United Cutlery)
A. Handle grip for the no spin throw
B. Blade grip for the half spin overhand throw

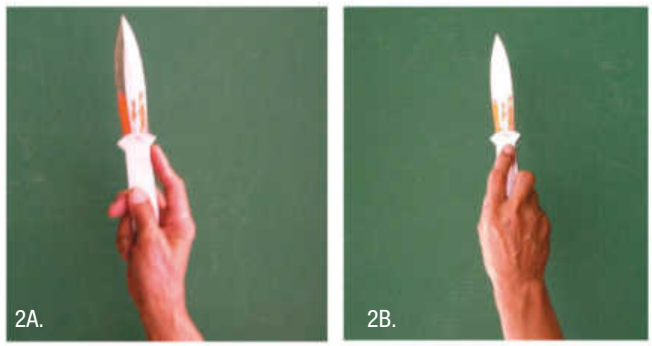


Figure 2. Grips on a 9" knife (designed by the author)
A. Handle grip for the full spin throw
B. Handle grip for the half spin throw



Figure 3. Grips on a dull edged 12¾" knife
A. Grip for the full spin throw B. Grip for the no spin throw

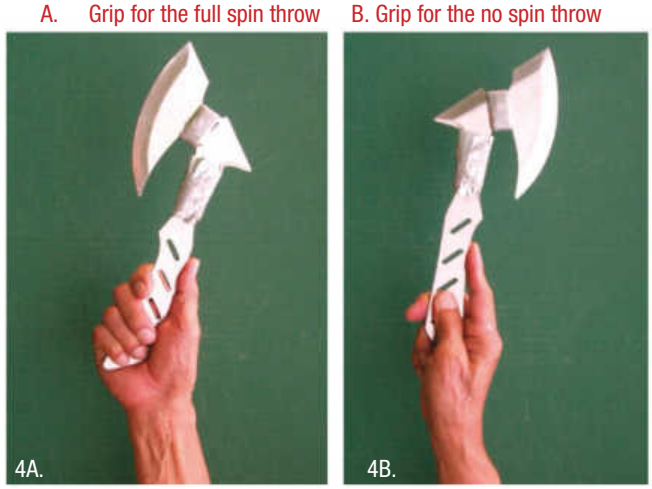


Figure 4. Grips on an 11½" ax (duct tape was used to increase its weight)

Continued on page 82

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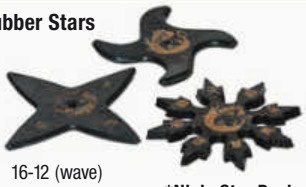
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Continued from page 80: Flying Sword

How Do I Throw the Knife?

A knife can be thrown overhand or underhand. The more common throw is overhand.

For overhand, the throwing action is a simultaneous twist of the body and the extension of the elbow. For underhand, the throw is completed by bending the elbow simultaneous with a body twist. However, the body twist and the elbow action for underhand is markedly less pronounced than for overhand. In all throws, there should be a follow through.

Mechanics of the Throw

To consistently make a knife hit point-first, you must throw the knife with the same body motion using the same grip in every throw. The mechanics of the throw must be perfected as follows.

Stance – For a right-hand thrower, if the throw originates from the right side, the left foot should be in front (Stance A, Stance D). If the throw originates from the left side, the right foot should be in front (Stance B, C). These stances are used in combat knife-throwing and allow a full body twist for powerful throws.

In competition knife-throwing, the right foot leads for a right hand throw except when throwing multiple spins at long distances. Competition knife-throwers need not throw with full power when throwing from close distances. It is enough that the knife sticks. In combat knife-throwing, the depth of penetration is as important as the location of the hit.

Right-handed professional knife-throwers usually throw with their right foot in front. However, the power in their throws does not come from a full body twist but from the momentum of the long (about 16") and heavy (at least 14 oz) knives that they throw. Depth of penetration as well as the location of the stick is critical. If a knife sticks but then pops out, it could cause serious injury to the assistant (who could be attached to a rotating wheel or framed on a fixed wooden board).

Arm and Body Motion – Pull back your arm smoothly, inhale slowly, and at the same time transfer your body's weight progressively to your rear foot. Hold your breath at the end of the backward swing and as you swing your arm forward.

At the end of your arm's forward motion, you will feel the knife tugging at your fingers. If you gripped the knife correctly, the knife will simply slide off your fingers. If you gripped it too lightly, it will sail over the target. If you gripped it too tightly, it will hit the foot of the target.

Stances (courtesy Amante D. Mariñas II)



A) Throw from over the right shoulder.



B) Throwing from over the left shoulder.



C) Throw from the lower left side.



D) Throwing from the lower right side.

"THE MECHANICS OF THE THROW MUST BE PERFECTED..."

Exhale as the knife slides off your fingers.

Follow-Through – Your swing must be smooth and with full follow-through. Don't abruptly stop your forward swing like using a whip. Though you might make the knife hit point-first, you will not be consistent.



The author practicing his throws; a twist of the body and full follow-through ensures a powerful throw (photo by Thoraya Zedan).

How Far Should I Be from the Target?

Your distance from the target depends on many factors. In the "with spin" throws, you must throw from discrete distances. The throwing distance for one full spin using a 12¾" knife (gripped as shown on page 80: Figure 3A) is about 12 feet; for two full spins, 20 feet 4 inches. The throwing distances for the same knife for a ½ spin (gripped as shown in Figure 3B) is about 9 feet; for 1½ spin, about 17 feet 8 inches. If you throw one foot closer or farther away from the target using the same grip, the knife will not stick.



Targets used in the NEAKTA (Northeast American Knife Throwers Alliance) competitions (courtesy of Joe "Brokenfeather" Darrah and Thoraya Zedan).

For the "no spin" throw, knives can be thrown from a range of distances. The ax (Figure 4B) can be thrown with no spin from point-blank range to as far away as 20 feet.

You might be tempted to throw knives or axes from as far as 60 feet using the "with spin" throws. But throwing from such a distance, if done excessively, could harm your throwing arm.

What Is the Best Target for Practice?

You can use wood or several layers of cardboard for a target. Wood is expensive. You can get cardboard for free from your neighborhood supermarket. You can also use a mound of earth for your target. (Do not throw at live trees! You're bound to kill them.)

If you throw in your basement, do not use wood as a target. A badly thrown knife could take a crazy bounce and come back at you at the speed you threw it. Use light knives and several layers of cardboard instead. Remember to cover the floor with a couple of layers of carpet or cardboard. Otherwise, it will become pockmarked.

Which Is the Better Throw?

If you throw knives for fun in your backyard, it doesn't matter whether you throw with or without spin. But most professional knife-throwers throw half spins.

Most knives can be thrown with one full spin from about 12 feet; with half spin, from about 9 feet. In combat, one should not throw a knife from beyond a one full-spin or one half-spin distance. With this criteria, it will not matter whether the throw is no spin or with spin. While a knife can stick thrown from a range of distances with no spin, it is easy enough to judge the 12-foot or 9-foot distance instinctively and make a knife thrown with spin hit point-first.

Army-type knives like the K-Bar and the AK-47 bayonet have straps and pommels to ensure a secure grip. Their handle design will not allow a smooth release. For this reason, it will be difficult to make army-type knives hit point-first consistently when thrown with no spin even from as close as 12 feet. It will be more difficult if the hand is covered with blood, sweat, or dirt.

Techniques of Throwing the Flying Sword

The books by Douglas Hsieh and Huang Yuan-xiou do not describe how the flying sword was gripped or how it was thrown. However, the weight and dimensions of the flying sword give us a clue as to how it was used:

1. the flying sword is double-edged; hence, it has to be thrown by the handle;
2. it is 8 inches long, about ½" wide, and about 3/16" thick; hence, it is light (if it was made longer, it would be difficult to conceal);
3. It weighs only 5 oz; hence, it must be thrown overhand (page 82: Stances A and B).
4. Because of its lightness, the flying sword must be thrown with a full body twist to ensure deep penetration when it makes contact with the target.

The flying sword has limited stopping power. For this reason, Chinese masters in ancient times carried six flying swords in two lines in a leather scabbard. This method of carry allows for multiple opponents or multiple throws against one opponent. Its lightness requires that it be thrown at close quarters and has to be aimed at soft targets such as the face, throat, or temple.

The flying sword is a versatile weapon. It can be used in hand-to-hand combat because it is double-edged. It can be thrown overhand with full spin from about 14 feet (using the grip in Grip A), with full spin from about 12 feet (using the grip shown in Grip B), or with no spin (underhand or overhand) from point-blank range up to 9 feet. These are the optimum combat throwing distances where there is the highest probability that the flying sword will hit point-first. (The throwing distance for 2 full spins using the grip as in Grip A is about 26 feet. If held as in Grip B the throwing distance for two full spins is 21½ feet. The half spin underhand throwing distance is about 12 feet.)

The flying sword techniques must have been an integral part of Wudang's empty hand and weapons fighting, for at close quarters the initiation of the throw has to be disguised by some other movements. Otherwise, the enemy could advance and prevent the throw.

The Reader and the Flying Sword

Unfortunately, since flying swords are hard to come by (this author has not seen a suitable knife in any knife catalog), the interested reader will likely need to make his own. This is not that difficult. You can buy tool steel from hardware stores that is 3/16" thick and 1" wide – normally sold in 24- or 36-inch lengths. For equipment, you need a vise, a hacksaw, a couple of files, and some sandpaper. If you have a bench grinder, shaping the tip will be that much easier. (If you have big hands, make the handle about 4½" long and the blade 5½" long, giving an overall length of 10". Use the circular finger guard as your reference point.)

Making the flying sword is the easy part. The hard part is becoming proficient with the weapon. As with all martial arts, practice is the key. ☯

Amante P. Mariñas I is a chemical engineer and teaches *pananandata*, his family's weapons fighting system where knife-throwing is an integral part of knife fighting. He was inducted into the International Knife Throwers Hall of Fame (IKTHOF) in 2007 and has written two books on knife-throwing: *Pananandata Guide to Knife Throwing* (United Cutlery, 1999) and *The Art of Throwing* (Tuttle Publishing, 2007, 2010). He designed the VM Bulalakaw that was marketed by United Cutlery and which carries his name. In 1999, he introduced the use of the learning curve for tracking a knife-thrower's progress. He has thrown about 1,500,000 times at targets using knives, axes, spears, nails, chopsticks, scissors, screw drivers, chisels, swords, blowgun darts, etc.



Grips that can be used on the flying sword in the full spin (A, B) and no spin (C) throws. Grip (A) is best for hand-to-hand combat. At the same time, this grip will allow for a quick throw.

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							000	50 LBS.	4'0"
00	XXS			XS	00		00	65 LBS.	4'4"
0	XS				0	0	0	80 LBS.	4'6"
1				S	1	1	1	95 LBS.	4'9"
2	S				2	2	2	115 LBS.	5'2"
3			24	M	3	3	3	125 LBS.	5'5"
4	M	L	26		4	4	4	150 LBS.	5'7"
5	L			L	5	5	5	175 LBS.	5'9"
6	XL	XL		28	6	6	6	195 LBS.	6'0"
7			30	XL	7	7	7	225 LBS.	6'2"
							8	260 LBS.	6'5"

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	000	45 LBS.	3'5"
	00	60 LBS.	4'0"
0	0	80 LBS.	4'5"
1	1	100 LBS.	4'8"
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3	3	140 LBS.	5'6"
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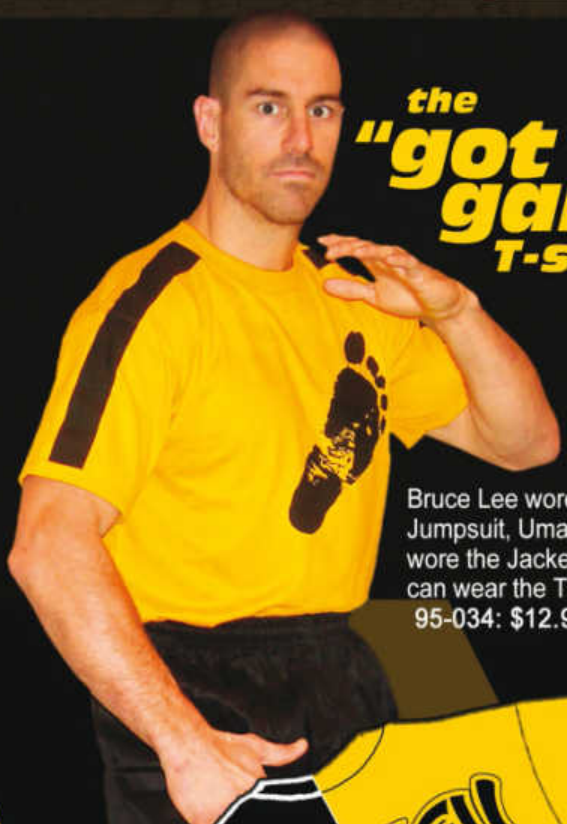
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From Christmas to Spring Festival

By Gene Ching

On June 18, *SPL 2: A Time for Consequences* (殺破狼 II) premiered in Asia. This is the sequel to the hard-hitting 2005 Donnie Yen and Sammo Hung film *Sha Po Lang* (殺破狼), which was re-titled as *Kill Zone* for U.S. audiences (*Sha Po Lang* is an obscure astrological reference that doesn't translate well – it literally means "kill destroy wolf"). Neither Donnie nor Sammo returned to the franchise. Instead, *SPL2* stars Tony Jaa and Max Zhang (张晋). Jaa has been busy following his throwback actioner *Skin Trade* with Dolph Lundgren as well as his appearance in the fast-car juggernaut *Furious 7*. His upcoming projects include another film with Lundgren, *A Man Will Rise*, which is on hold, and another throwback, *Never Back Down 3*, which is in post-production. Zhang is in the next installment of *Ip Man*, which is discussed later in this column. Jacky Wu Jing (吴京) and Simon Yam (任達華) are in both *SPL* and *SPL2* but playing different characters. Released in 3D, *SPL2* is dark and only marginally connected with the original. It did well at the Chinese Box office, especially considering that it opened the same weekend as China's premiere of the global tyrannosaurus blockbuster, *Jurassic World*. The centerpiece of *SPL2* is a chaotic prison fight, digitally stitched together from several single-take scenes, that is surely worth the price of admission in 3D. *SPL2* has been acquired by Well Go USA for U.S. distribution. Well Go USA has been leading the pack as purveyors of many fine Chinese and Korean films for home entertainment as well as limited U.S. theatrical releases like Jackie Chan's *Police Story: Lockdown* and Donnie Yen's *Kung Fu Killer*.

In September, Taiwan selected *The Assassin* as their submission for the Academy Award Best Foreign Film category. Directed by Hou Hsiao-hsien (侯孝賢) and starring the gorgeous Shu Qi (舒淇), *The Assassin* earned Hou the Best Director award at Cannes and enjoyed a limited U.S. theatrical release by Well Go USA in mid-October. *The Assassin* has earned 11 Golden Horse nominations, Taiwan's most prestigious film award. The 52nd Golden Horse Awards are held in Taipei on November 21, 2015, while this issue is at press. Film critics around the globe have hailed the film as a major cinematic achievement. However, it's glacial pacing might disappoint many hardcore action fans. In October, China switched their submission for the Oscars from *Wolf Totem* to *Go Away Mr. Tumor*. *Go Away Mr. Tumor* stars Daniel Wu as the leading man.

The 2015 Holiday Film Season looks fairly bare for martial arts films from Hollywood. As this was going to press, *Heist*, starring Robert De Niro, Kate Bosworth, Dave Bautista and Gina Carano, premiered in mid-November. This looks like more of a traditional action flick, although it looks like Gina will get to throw a few punches. Meanwhile, in the East, one of the most anticipated martial arts films, *Ip Man 3* (葉問3), in 3D, premieres on Christmas Day in Hong Kong. Donnie Yen returns in the role of the seminal Wing Chun master to face off against none other than former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson. The production ran into some controversy about the potential portrayal of Bruce Lee as a CGI character. Bruce Lee Enterprises raised a question about the intellectual property rights, but the film producers claim that Lee's brother Robert, a consultant on the film, has given sufficient permission. *Ip Man 3* has also been acquired by Well Go USA.

Speaking of Bruce backlash, in mid-October, Tollywood released *Bruce Lee – The Fighter*, starring Ram Charan and Rakul Preet Singh. Tollywood denotes an Indian film in Telugu language instead of Bollywood films in Hindi language from Mumbai (formerly Bombay, which is where the B comes from). Confusingly enough, Bollywood also plans to release a film titled *Bruce Lee*, directed by Ram Gopal Varma and introducing a new starlet named Pooja. It's being billed as India's First Martial Arts Film, which is clearly wrong, as it is being released on the heels of Ram Charan's *Bruce Lee* film, and completely overlooks the wonderful actioners by India's leading martial arts action star, Akshay Kumar. Additionally, it was announced that Korean heartthrob Kim Bum will portray Bruce Lee in a new Chinese television series from the Jiangsu Broadcasting Corporation. The working title of the series is *Yip Man and Bruce Lee*. At this writing, there has been no backlash from Bruce Lee Enterprises on either of the Indian films or the Chinese TV show.

Home Entertainment

The biggest news for television is AMC's *Into the Badlands* and *Kung Fu Fridays*. See the cover story on page 48 for more. This exclusive AMC content challenges Netflix's martial-arts-heavy exclusives *Marco Polo* and *Daredevil*, and DirecTV's *Kingdom*. All three series are going into their second season; *Kingdom* Season 2 began in mid-October 2015. The two Netflix exclusives are slated to debut their second seasons in early 2016.

Streaming has been inundated with classic Kung Fu cinema. This stands to reason. Every video store has a martial arts section. So naturally, as home entertainment shifts from DVDs and BRDs to streaming, the Kung Fu genre crosses over too. In 2013, El Rey acquired 255 Shaw Brothers films,



which it now showcases on Flying Five Finger One Armed Eight Pole Shaolin Exploding Death Touch Thursday. Perhaps in the wake of that, both Netflix and Hulu have also acquired many classic Shaw Brothers titles along with an odd assortment of other martial arts films. This forces El Rey to dig deeper into the Shaw library to bring up some delightful hidden treasures.

To Hulu's credit, it has also added some Hong Kong TV series like *Grace Under Fire* (*neui kyun* 女拳). This 2011 TVB soap opera stars Shaw Brother veteran David Chiang (姜大衛) as an elder Wong Fei Hung (黃飛鴻), and introduces Liu Xuan (刘璇), China's Olympic Gold Medalist gymnast, as Wong's last wife, Mok Kwai Lan (莫桂蘭). The real-life Mok married Wong when she was in her early twenties and he was pushing sixty. The series is outrageously melodramatic and highly addictive, like any good soap. There are dozens of China-made and Hong Kong-made Kung Fu TV shows, ranging from epic retellings of classics like the *Journey to the West* and *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, to modern dramas and comedies. Some of these are already available through DirecTV's or DISH networks Chinese channels and select web providers. Korean TV was trending recently, perhaps due to increased exposure on streaming platforms (Hulu even has a subcategory specifically for the Korean TV genre), so hopefully some more of these delightful Kung Fu serials will cross over too.

Coming Soon

The biggest Kung Fu flick coming soon is animated – the continuing adventures of Po. *Kung Fu Panda 3* is premiering worldwide on January 29, 2016. Joining the franchise ensemble of Jack Black, Dustin Hoffman, Angelina Jolie, Jackie Chan, Lucy Liu, David Cross, and Seth Rogen are J.K. Simmons, Bryan Cranston and Kate Hudson. Hudson replaced Rebel Wilson in September. The Chinese version will be voiced by Jackie Chan (of course – but will Monkey get an expanded role in the Chinese version?), Taiwan pop star Jay Chou (周杰倫) and *Star Wars: Rogue One* cast member Jiang Wu (姜文).

Xinhua reports that *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon II: The Green Legend* premieres February 8, 2016 in China. This is in the middle of Spring Festival, a profitable season for film premieres in China. As mentioned in previous installments of this column, Netflix announced it would premiere this film simultaneous with the theatrical premiere. Consequently, several of the leading U.S. theater chains announced they would boycott by not showing the film. News has been scarce on further developments since this commotion. Starring alongside Michelle Yeoh, *CTHD2* adds Donnie Yen, Nicholas Tse, Charlie Nguyen, and *Glee* alumni Harry Shum.

Ronda Rousey, the MMA belle of the ball, has been tapped to step into Patrick Swayze's boots in a remake of the '80s classic *Road House*. It's yet another addition to Rousey's Hollywood dance card, already filled with three other projects: *Mile 22*, *The Athena Project* and a film adaptation of her biography *My Fight/Your Fight*. Nick Cassavetes is writing and directing the remake. ☯

To keep up with the latest martial arts films, read reviews and discuss, visit our Kung FuMagazine.com Martial-Media-and-Popular-Culture forum.



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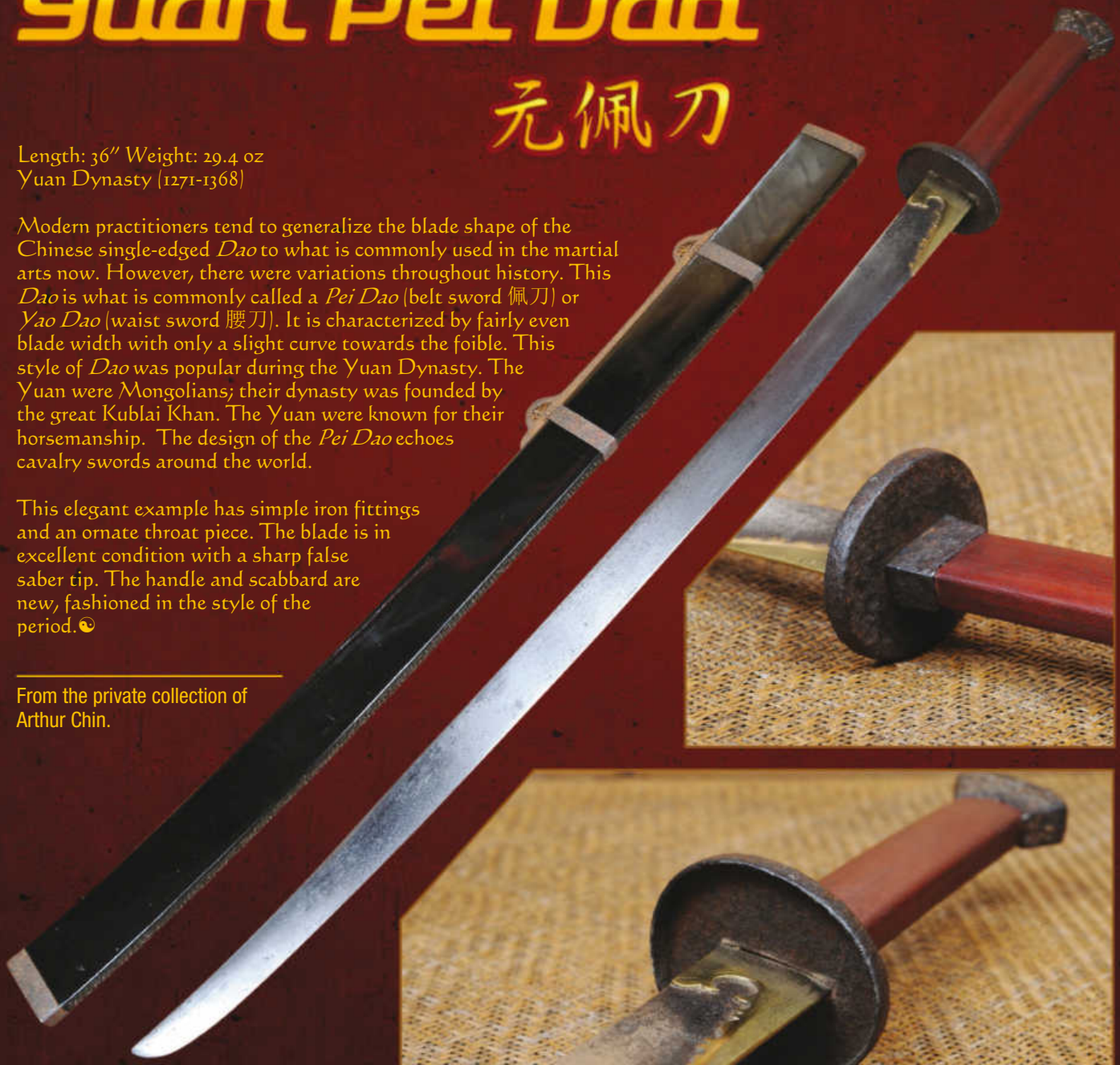
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Contribute to rebuilding the Northern Shaolin Temple!



You can donate directly to the Northern Shaolin Temple reconstruction fund.



The Shaolin Temple supports all kinds of charitable causes, for example they have a sizable orphanage and they do a lot of social work with poor people, the elderly and sick. Shaolin Monks are celibate vegetarians that live a very simple and highly disciplined life. They don't profit from such donations. There's a lot of research on happiness which shows that doing something good - for example helping others - for no particular reason - seems to contribute greatly to lasting attainment of that sometimes illusive state. You may also earn some sizable nirvana points, depending upon your true motivation.

Donations to the reconstruction of the North Shaolin can be made to the following account:

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When sending money, please also send an e-mail to North Shaolin's new Abbot, Shi Yan Pei at shaolinyanpei@163.com saying how much was sent, your name and a signature. All donations are sincerely appreciated.

KUNG FU HOROSCOPES: December 7, 2015 to February 4, 2016

By Wilson Sun
(with Gigi Oh and Gene Ching)

In Chinese cosmology, this period is classified as winter so it's important to keep warm in the cold weather. Focus on self-cultivation and take particular good care of your teeth. Here's some advice to stay healthy: 1. Go to sleep earlier and get up later. Avoid excessive night life. Get to bed by 11:00 PM. 2. Limit sexual activity to ensure plenty of energy every day. If you feel tired, take a break and rest. Nourish yourself with tonics. 3. Eat well in the winter. A balanced nutritional diet is best for recovery and rehabilitation. 4. Get plenty of exercise. In winter, the best way to stay healthy is through internal cultivation, specifically Qigong and Tai Chi. 5. Keep warm. Avoid evil winds because wind is believed to be the leader of a hundred diseases. 6. Don't eat excessively salty foods. Salt depletes your kidney. Bitter foods are better for your kidney and heart. The following two recipes are recommended for this time of year:

Sesame Porridge (芝麻白糖粥)

500 gm sesame seeds Sugar to taste

Add sesame seeds into the pan and roast at low heat until they smell fragrant. Grind seeds into powder after cooling down. Store the powder in a sealed jar. When ready to eat, take two tablespoons sesame seed powder, add warm water and sugar to taste. Benefits: Suitable for daily tonic. Alleviates premature aging, dry cough, dry skin, premature graying, and elderly constipation.

Oatmeal Porridge (燕麦粥)

50 gm oatmeal

Add adequate water with oatmeal and cook into porridge. Benefits: Spleen tonic. Help to maintain skin elasticity and inhibit formation of senile plaques. Take daily for breakfast and/or dinner.

Rat 鼠: 1924 Wood, 1936 Fire, 1948 Earth, 1960 Metal, 1972 Water, 1984 Wood, 1996 Fire, 2008 Earth

12/7/15–1/6/16: During this period, you are quite attractive and communicate well. Seize the opportunities during this extensive time for heightened social intercourse.
1/6/16–2/4/16: You'll gain benefits through cooperation, but do not get delayed by trivial matters. It's important to distinguish your priorities.

"Be creative, have a good time and be yourself" Rat Emily Beecham

Ox 牛: 1925 Wood, 1937 Fire, 1949 Earth, 1961 Metal, 1973 Water, 1985 Wood, 1997 Fire, 2009 Earth

12/7/15–1/6/16: Rid yourself of troubles and entanglements at this time. To seize the opportunity, you must do things in a timely manner.
1/6/16–2/4/16: It's an easy time to cause friction among your colleagues. Make peace with people. Demonstrate the appropriate humility and you can ease worrying matters with others.

"Life is nutty; anything can happen." Ox Paul Shaffer

Tiger 虎: 1926 Fire, 1938 Earth, 1950 Metal, 1962 Water, 1974 Wood, 1986 Fire, 1998 Earth, 2010 Metal

12/7/15–1/6/16: Avoid getting involved in disputes among friends. In this case, trying to intermediate will backfire. It's no good to be nosy now.
1/6/16–2/4/16: Love appears. Don't miss the opportunity. Be on the lookout for who might be the most suitable person.

"I think the best thing about martial arts is that it's very kind of up to you, how you want to advance in that sport or in that martial art – and if you're lazy, you're not going to get far." Tiger Daniel Wu

Hare 兔: 1927 Fire, 1939 Earth, 1951 Metal, 1963 Water, 1975 Wood, 1987 Fire, 1999 Earth, 2011 Metal

12/7/15–1/6/16: Love is in the air. Whether you are married or not, you should take advantage of this opportunity for romance, as long as it is conducted legitimately.
1/6/16–2/4/16: Emotional problems will resurface. Make a frank confession. If you try to express your feelings in a roundabout way, you often harm yourself and others.

"I think not only is the martial arts groundbreaking but casting [Wu and I] as predominant characters is also groundbreaking. It's never been done before." Hare Aramis Knight

Dragon 龍: 1928 Earth, 1940 Metal, 1952 Water, 1964 Wood, 1976 Fire, 1988 Earth, 2000 Metal, 2012 Water

12/7/15–1/6/16: Watch out for an emotional swirl. Be careful of gossip. It will hinder your ability to maintain your right mind. Think more with your brain when something happens.
1/6/16–2/4/16: This is a good time to make decisions. Good luck will be sent right to your front door. The practical and objective approach is the right choice.

"I went to Paris for a year in 1986 to study theatre; there was a lot of clowning around, buffoonery and fencing." Dragon Orla Brady

Snake 蛇: 1929 Earth, 1941 Metal, 1953 Water, 1965 Wood, 1977 Fire, 1989 Earth, 2001 Metal, 2013 Water

12/7/15–1/6/16: More opportunities will appear, but do not approach them half-heartedly. Grab the chance. Go for what you do best and you won't go wrong.
1/6/16–2/4/16: Poor work plans and sloppy execution lies ahead. If you're anxious, that is the way to failure. It's very important to think calmly now.

"You can't go fighting everyone that's harsh towards you." Snake Jake Lloyd

Horse 馬: 1930 Metal, 1942 Water, 1954 Wood, 1966 Fire, 1978 Earth, 1990 Metal, 2002 Water, 2014 Wood

12/7/15–1/6/16: You'll be tempted to act on blind impulse, but you have to think twice. Listen to the views of at least three or more other people before acting.
1/6/16–2/4/16: Do not get involved in the personal disputes of others. If you do, you are just asking for trouble. Just stay out of it.

"I would take lots of falls and you know, get shot three or four times and this sort of thing, so all that sort of stuff. And there are tussles with various characters. I like that kind of thing." Horse Marton Csokas

Ram 羊: 1931 Metal, 1943 Water, 1955 Wood, 1967 Fire, 1979 Earth, 1991 Metal, 2003 Water, 2015 Wood

12/7/15–1/6/16: Pay close attention to maintaining your health. It's an easy time for you to get hurt. Be careful to avoid conflicts with family members. Proceed slowly and surely.
1/6/16–2/4/16: Approach everything conservatively. Avoid the temptation to show off; it will just make things more tangled. Plan well before taking action.

"I'm always prepared. Like the scouts." Ram Sarah Bolger

Monkey 猴: 1920 Metal, 1932 Water, 1944 Wood, 1956 Fire, 1968 Earth, 1980 Metal, 1992 Water, 2004 Wood

12/7/15–1/6/16: You'll benefit by partnering up now. Win with affection. More of your friends and contacts will have new harvests.
1/6/16–2/4/16: Enthusiasm is high. Take advantage of developments in the market. Be an innovative entrepreneur. Avoid contact with negative and pessimistic people.

"Real courage is knowing what faces you and knowing how to face it." Monkey Timothy Dalton

Rooster 雞: 1921 Metal, 1933 Water, 1945 Wood, 1957 Fire, 1969 Earth, 1981 Metal, 1993 Water, 2005 Wood

12/7/15–1/6/16: Interpersonal problems emerge. Too much profitability will inevitably lead to disharmony among friends. Don't let greed devour friendships.
1/6/16–2/4/16: Do not covet small profits or you'll lose a big chance for a tiny gain. Avoid offending good friends too as that might also lead to the loss of an excellent opportunity.

"That gives you power, because you're no longer scared of it happening anymore. You got hit, and it hurt, but you're okay." Rooster Amy Schumer

Dog 狗: 1922 Water, 1934 Wood, 1946 Fire, 1958 Earth, 1970 Metal, 1982 Water, 1994 Wood, 2006 Fire

12/7/15–1/6/16: Pay attention to balancing your work and rest, otherwise it will affect your health poorly. Many misunderstanding and conflicts arise with colleagues. Be clear.
1/6/16–2/4/16: You'll have emotional fluctuations and poor endurance. Make sure to get enough rest and sleep to help keep your normal state of mind and heart.

"I think it's great to be flawed. I am hugely flawed, and I like it this way. That's the fun of life. You fall, get up, make mistakes, learn from them, be human and be you." Dog Priyanka Chopra

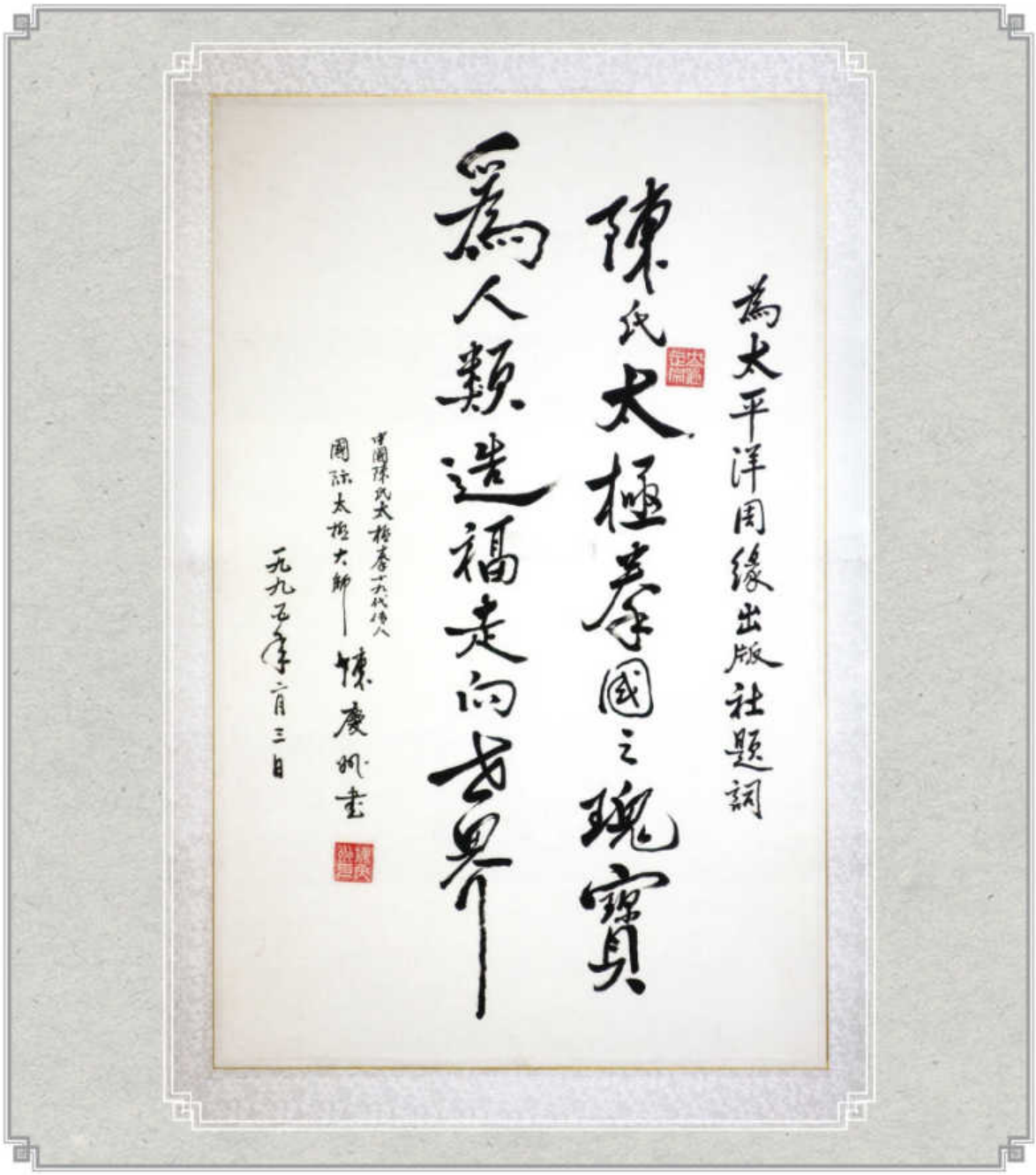
Pig 豬: 1923 Water, 1935 Wood, 1947 Fire, 1959 Earth, 1971 Metal, 1983 Water, 1995 Wood, 2007 Fire

12/7/15–1/6/16: Seek wisdom. Focus on keeping your wits about you. Go to wit and wisdom for help. Do not do it alone. Only a collective effort will win now.
1/6/16–2/4/16: Save your strength. Make sure that you have enough in reserve for what is coming. If you are fatigued at work, important things will get delayed.

"I maintain that nothing useful and lasting can emerge from violence." Pig Shirin Ebadi

Astrologist Wilson Sun is a Feng Shui Master from Shanghai – wusun5@yahoo.com. Read more Kung Fu Horoscopes online at www.KungFuMagazine.com





Chen Shi Taijiquan guo zhi gui bao. Wei ren lei zao fu zou xiang shi jie 陳氏太極拳國之瑰寶。為人類造福走向世界

By Grandmaster Chen Qingzhou (陳慶州)

Chen Shi Taijiquan (tones: 2, 4, 4, 2, 2 陳氏太極拳) means 'Chen family Taijiquan'. *Guo* (2nd tone 國) means 'nation' and *zhi* (1st tone 之) is a possessive modifier. *Gui* (1st tone 瑰) means 'extraordinary' and *bao* (3rd tone 寶) means 'treasure' or 'jewel'.

Wei (4th tone 為) means 'do' or 'govern', *ren* (2nd tone 人) means 'man' but in this case, it expands to mean 'mankind', *lei* (4th tone 類) means 'class' or 'group', *zao* (4th tone 造) means 'build' and *fu* (2nd tone 福) means 'happiness' or 'blessing'. *Zou* (3rd tone 走) means 'walk' and *xiang* (4th tone 向) means 'toward'; together they combine to mean 'march'. *Shi* (4th tone 世) means 'world' and *jie* (4th tone 界) means 'society'.

This can be translated as 'Chen family Taijiquan is a national extraordinary treasure. It builds happiness and blessings as it marches to the society of the world.'

This calligraphy was gifted to *Kung Fu Tai Chi* by Grandmaster Chen Qingzhou, who passed away on September 21, 2015 (see page 17). The text also gives the date, February 3rd, 1995, and dedicates it to Pacific Rim Publishing, which was *Kung Fu Tai Chi's* parent company back then.

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